DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 472 113 CE 082 863

TITLE	A New Impetus for European Youth. European Commission White Paper.
INSTITUTION	Commission of the European Communities, Brussels (Belgium).
REPORT NO	COM-2001-681
PUB DATE	2001-11-21
NOTE	77p.; Paper is also available in Danish, German, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Finnish, Swedish, Greek, Italian and Dutch.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/whitepaper/download/whi tepaper_en.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adjustment (to Environment); Advisory Committees; Cooperative Planning; Coordination; Delivery Systems; Democracy; Economic Change; Economic Climate; Education Work Relationship; Educational Environment; Educational Needs; Educational Planning; Educational Policy; Employment Patterns; Foreign Countries; Futures (of Society); International Cooperation; International Organizations; International Programs; Lifelong Learning; Models; National Programs; *Policy Formation; Population Trends; Position Papers; Postsecondary Education; Program Development; *Public Policy; *Regional Planning; Social Change; *Social Integration; *Strategic Planning; Trend Analysis; Values; Work Environment; Youth; Youth Employment; Youth Problems; *Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS	Council of Europe (France); *European Union

ABSTRACT

Despite their highly divergent situations, young people largely share the same values, ambitions, and difficulties. Despite the more complex social and economic context in which young Europeans are currently living, they are well equipped to adapt. National and European policymakers must facilitate this process of change by making young people stakeholders in their societies. Youth must be regarded as a positive force in the construction of Europe rather than as a problem. Although the European Union's individual member states must still bear the brunt of putting various youth-related measures into practice, it is important to give a European dimension to youth-related activities. A new framework for European cooperation must be developed and must comprise these two main aspects: applying the open method of coordination in the specific field of youth and taking better account of the "youth" dimension in other policy initiatives. The framework must also include provisions for listening to what young people have to say and must offer a forum for local initiatives while encouraging member states to cooperate more effectively and develop concrete ideas under existing European programs. (Appendixes constituting approximately 75% of this document contain a detailed discussion of the results of the consultation and an overview of European action on the youth front.) (MN)

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ED 472 113

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 21.11.2001
COM(2001) 681 final

EUROPEAN COMMISSION WHITE PAPER

A NEW IMPETUS FOR EUROPEAN YOUTH

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FOREWORD

The decision to publish this White Paper on youth policy, and especially the decision to conduct wide-ranging consultations beforehand, is rooted primarily in the desire to promote new forms of European governance.

The White Paper is fully coherent with the Commission's White Paper on Governance adopted in July of this year: the point is to open up the European Union (EU)'s decision-making process to the people who will be affected by those decisions, and that includes young people.

Young people to the fore

The results of the wide-ranging consultation exercise which preceded this White Paper are clear: despite highly divergent situations, young people largely share the same values and the same ambitions, but also the same difficulties. Young people form a changing group, tending to enter the job market and start a family later in life; they are switching backwards and forwards between work and learning; but above all is that their individual pathways are much more varied than in the past. School and university, work and the social environment no longer play the same integrating role that they used to. Young people are acquiring autonomous status later and later in life.

All this is often reflected in a sense of fragility, a loss of confidence in the existing decision-making systems, and a degree of disaffection in terms of the traditional forms of participation in public life and in youth organisations. Some of them feel that they do not always find their own concerns reflected in public policies conceived by and for their elders. Some young people have taken refuge in indifference or individualism, while others have tried forms of expression which may have been excessive or even on the margins of democratic means. The majority, though, want to influence policies, but have not found the appropriate way of doing so.

Nonetheless, young europeans have a lot to say; after all, these are precisely the people who are primarily affected by economic change, demographic imbalance, globalisation or cultural diversity. We are expecting them to create new forms of social relations, different ways of expressing solidarity or of coping with differences and finding enrichment in them, while new uncertainties appear.

Despite the more complex social and economic context, young people are well equipped to adapt. It is up to the national and European policy-makers to facilitate this process of change by making young people stakeholders in our societies.

Young people and Europe

The debate on the future of Europe is up and running. An unprecedented wave of enlargement will soon be creating entirely new perspectives. The message that has been coming across clearly over these recent years in the political life of Europe is that the EU must take shape with the people of Europe. It is important that consultations on the way the EU will develop and on its form of governance should include the people to whom tomorrow's Europe belongs. The European project is itself young, still forming and still being debated. If it is to make progress, it needs ambition and enthusiasm, and commitment on the part of young people to the values on which it is based.

If young people have one clear message, it is that they want their voice to be heard and want to be regarded as fully-fledged participants in the process; they want to play their part in building Europe; they want to influence the debate on the way it develops. It is time now to regard youth as a positive force in the construction of Europe rather than as a problem. In other words, we have to give young people the wherewithal to express their ideas, and to test them against similar ideas from other players in civil society.

From local to European: a new dynamic

Most of the suggestions mentioned in this White Paper address the Member States and the regions of Europe, which bear the brunt of putting the various youth-related measures into practice. It is on the ground, where young people can see the results of their personal commitment, that active citizenship becomes a reality. It is by taking part in the life of schools, neighbourhoods, local districts or associations that young people can acquire the experience and the confidence they need to go a step further, either now or later, in public life — including at European level. It is by throwing themselves into social activities which are open to all, without any form of discrimination, that young people can make their contribution to a more solidarity-conscious society and live citizenship to the full.

It is important, though, to give a European dimension to youth-related activities, with a view to boosting the effectiveness and synergies, while safeguarding and stressing the degree of responsibility proper to each level of action. This is what consulted young people are calling for; it is what the European Parliament supports; and it is what the Member States are advocating, as it was made clear during the Commission's consultation exercise. In response, the White Paper suggests a new framework for European cooperation comprising two main aspects: applying the open method of coordination in the specific field of youth; and taking better account of the "youth" dimension in other policy initiatives.

This European dimension will create a sense of dynamism on the ground, and will stimulate creativity, encourage the exchange and comparison of good practices, and foster national and European recognition of what individuals and youth organisations are doing on the local or regional scene. It will help to create a common vision and give a better idea of youth-related issues, and will make it possible to work more effectively, collaboratively, and by deciding on common objectives.

Listening to what young people have to say and offering a forum for local initiatives, encouraging the Member States to cooperate more effectively, coming up with concrete ideas under existing European programmes, and giving the "youth" dimension a higher profile in all policy areas: that is the approach proposed by this White Paper for creating the right conditions to enable young people to play a full part in the life of democratic, open and caring societies.

1. BACKGROUND

Following enlargement, there will be 75 million young people in Europe between the ages of 15 and 25[1]. Whatever their differences (in terms of access to the labour market, education, family life, income, etc.), young people see themselves as fully-fledged citizens with all the attendant rights and obligations. Investing in youth is an investment in the richness of our societies, today and tomorrow. It is therefore one of the keys to achieving the political objective laid down by the Lisbon European Council: making Europe "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world".

The Treaties provide the basis for action in a wide range of sectors[2] which affect young people directly or indirectly: discrimination, European citizenship, employment, social exclusion, education, vocational training, culture, health, consumer protection, freedom of movement, environmental protection, mobility for young researchers, development cooperation and poverty.

There are various Community measures which impact more directly on young people: in the fields of education, employment and vocational training, and more recently in terms of access to information technologies, to name but a few.

Over and above the general and sectoral policies which affect young people, there is another type of activity which encourages mobility, inter-cultural exchanges, citizenship and voluntary work. Within this context, and on the basis of Article 149 of the Treaty[3], the EU has introduced a series of programmes, including the YOUTH programme, which have in turn led to mobility and exchange schemes for young

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1 Youth is regarded here as the period from 15 to 25 years of age, by analogy with what Parliament and the Council decided for the YOUTH programme. "Following enlargement" means taking into account the present Member States and the 12 countries currently negociating membership.

2 Cf. Annex 2 "Overview on European action on the youth front". This summary document includes all European actions related to youth; all future action must use these as a basis.

3 Article 149 of the Treaty:
1. The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.
2. Community action shall be aimed at:
- developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States;
- encouraging mobility of students and teachers, inter alia by encouraging the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study;
- promoting cooperation between educational establishments;
- developing exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems of the Member States;
- encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors;
- encouraging the development of distance education.
3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of education, in particular the Council of Europe.
4. In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, the Council:
- acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 251, after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, shall adopt incentive measures, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States;
- acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.

people. This cooperation has gradually spread to include other areas such as information, exchanges between organisations and voluntary service.

More generally, there are a number of subjects — such as participation or autonomy for young people — which are not directly a Community concern, but which merit in-depth analysis because of their close links with youth policy and their political impact, the idea being to provide Member States with a practical resource for coordinating their action in the sectors concerned.

All of these specific youth-related activities have received the unswerving support of the European Parliament, both when programmes were being adopted and in the form of resolutions and hearings for young people. The Council of Youth Ministers has adopted a series of resolutions on youth participation, the educational potential of sport, social integration, initiative and entrepreneurship among young people. The Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions regularly deliver positive and encouraging opinions on various issues related to youth.

The question now is whether these activities are enough to meet the range of challenges which young people today are confronted with, and whether the European policy-makers are making best use of the potential among young people. The fact is that the resolutions or declarations on specifically youth-related issues have often gone no further than good intentions and the European institutions and the Member States lack an overview of the policies and hence of the various types of action which can be taken to support young people. The current system of European cooperation in the field of youth has reached its limits and is in danger of no longer being able to respond to new challenges (see point 2):

- demographic and social change, which is making relations between the generations more complex;
- the widening gap between young people and public affairs at national, European and international levels, with the attendant risk of a "citizenship deficit";
- investing in the quality of the debate on the future of the European Union, as a democratic imperative, and encouraging closer links with people, civil society and local players, as advocated by the White Paper on European governance[4].

Promoting new forms of European governance is one of the four strategic priorities set by the Commission. The term 'governance' refers to all the rules, mechanisms and practices which affect the way the various powers are deployed, as well as opening up the EU decision-making process to enable the people of Europe to be involved in the decisions which concern them.

This modernisation of European public action is supported by five fundamental principles: openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence.

Youth is an area in which, above all else, these principles should apply:

[4] "European governance — a White Paper", COM(2001)428, 25.07.2001.

- **Openness:** providing information and active communication for young people, in their language, so that they understand the workings of Europe and of the policies which concern them.

- **Participation:** ensuring young people are consulted and more involved in the decisions which concern them and, in general, the life of their communities.

- **Accountability:** developing a new and structured form of cooperation between the Member States and the European institutions, in order to find ways, at the appropriate level of accountability, of meeting the aspirations of young people.

- **Effectiveness:** making the most of what young people have to offer so that they can respond to the challenges of society, contribute to the success of the various policies which concern them and build the Europe of the future.

- **Coherence:** developing an overview of the various policies which concern young people and the different levels at which intervention is useful.

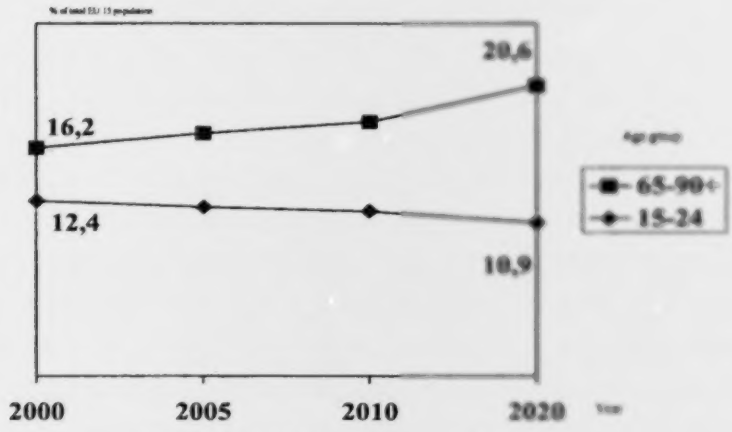
The decision to publish the White Paper on youth policy, and in particular the decision to run the earlier consultation exercise, are one outcome of this "governance" approach.

2. CHALLENGES

2.1. Demographic trends

Our societies are ageing due to the combined effect of a lower birth rate and increased longevity. Between 2000 and 2020, the 65-90 age group will increase from 16% to 21% of the total population of the European Union, while the 15-24 age group will fall to only 11%[5].

The ageing of the EU-15 population between 2000 and 2020



Source: Eurostat, Demographic Statistics 1999, national [illegible]

[5] Source: Eurostat, Demographic Statistics, 1999.

This quantitative imbalance between young and old will bring about a qualitative change in relations between generations. The financial pressure on social welfare systems will be only one aspect of this challenge. Indeed, we will have not only to invent new mechanisms for solidarity between young people and their parents or even their grandparents, but above all to organise, to everyone's satisfaction, the transition between generations in societies undergoing profound change.

This ageing of the population will also make it necessary to call on human resources from outside the European Union in order to make up for labour shortages. Our societies will have to diversify in ethnic, religious, social and linguistic terms. And all this will have to be properly controlled, particularly with regards to young people, if we are to avoid social tensions or negative repercussions for education systems and the labour market.

2.2. Changing youth

The sociological, economic and cultural aspects of youth have changed significantly as a result of demographic changes and changes in the social environment, individual and collective behaviour, family relationships and labour market conditions[6].

First, youth is lasting longer. Demographers have observed that, under pressure from economic factors (employability, unemployment, etc.) and socio-cultural factors, young people are, on average, older when they reach the various stages of life: end of formal education, start of employment, starting a family, etc.

A second point concerns non-linear paths through life. Today "our various life-roles are becoming confused[7]": it is possible simultaneously to be a student, have family responsibilities, have a job, be seeking a job and be living with one's parents, and young people now move increasingly often between these different roles. Paths through life are becoming less linear as societies no longer offer the same guarantees (job security, social security benefits, etc.).

Third, the traditional collective models are losing ground as personal pathways are becoming increasingly individualised. "The organisation of individuals' family, marriage and career plans is no longer standardised".[8] This is impacting particularly strongly on public authorities' policies.

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6 Cf. report presented by researchers at the Umeå seminar in March 2001 (http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/ywp/umeareport.html)

7 *"Jeunesse, le devoir d'avenir"*, *Commissariat Général du Plan*, Report from the committee chaired by Dominique Charvet, March 2001, p.33.

8 *"Jeunesse, le devoir d'avenir"*, ibid, p. 35.

2.3. Involving young people in public life

As a rule, young people in Europe are keen to foster democracy and more especially to play their part in it. But mistrust has set in with regards to the institutional structures. Young people are now less committed than in the past to the traditional structures for political and social action (e.g. parties, trade unions), and they have a low level of involvement in democratic consultation. Youth organisations are also feeling the pinch and perceive the need to reinvent themselves[9].

This by no means implies that young people are not interested in public life. Most show a clear will to participate and to influence the choices made by society, but they wish to do so on a more individual and more one-off basis, outside of the old participatory structures and mechanisms.

It is up to the public authorities to bridge the gap between young people's eagerness to express their opinions and the methods and structures which society offers. Failure to do so might fuel the 'citizenship' deficit, or even encourage protest.

2.4. European integration

This trend also applies to the European Union, a subject on which young people in general have mixed feelings. For them, Europe is about respect for fundamental values, but it is also the place in which they live, study, work and travel. However, they feel that the institutions responsible for managing this area are distant and operate behind closed doors. This gap between young people and Europe is merely one illustration of the distance between the people of Europe and "Brussels"[10]. And yet, in pursuing the Community goal, particularly with a view to enlargement, a great deal depends on involving future generations. It is essential that young people be 'taken on board' as active partners in specific projects suited to their situations, aspirations and abilities.

2.5. Globalisation

In relative terms, this same dichotomy exists between young people and the trend towards globalisation. Young people in Europe form part of societies which are open to outside cultural and economic influences. The world is their frame of reference, and they have no hesitation in espousing the kind of products which symbolise globalisation[11]. At the same time, they dispute some of the consequences of globalisation on grounds of social justice, openness and 'sustainable' development. They have doubts about the international institutions, which seem to them to be

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9 Eurobarometer 55.1 on young people in Europe in 2001 (EB 55.1) indicates that young people are slightly disaffected with organisations, with one in two young people stating spontaneously that they do not belong to any grouping. National disparities remain (in the Netherlands almost 80% of young people belong to organisations, as against 30% in Portugal). This variable level of dissatisfaction concerns all countries except Belgium and Luxembourg. Among young people who belong to organisations, sports clubs are most popular (28%), far ahead of youth organisations (7%), trade unions and political parties (4%).

10 Cf. "European governance – a white paper", ibid.

11 These include information technologies, such as the Internet, electronic mail and the mobile telephone. According to Eurobarometer 55.1, the percentage of people in the 15-25 age group who say they regularly use a computer, go online, play video games, etc. has more than doubled since 1997, from 21% to 43%. Another significant finding is that 80% of young people regularly use a mobile telephone.

relatively inaccessible, arcane and unconcerned about young people's issues. This relationship between young people and globalisation, which is mixed to say the least, is a sign of malaise and must not be ignored.

This very largely confirms the major issue in terms of globalisation: "Whether we like it or not, globalisation is here. Our task is to control it, to use it to the benefit of mankind"[12].

All of this presents an enormous challenge. We need to put in place the right conditions to enable young people in Europe to see themselves and behave more as supportive, responsible, active and tolerant citizens in plural societies. Getting young people more involved in the life of the local, national and European communities, and fostering active citizenship thus represent one of the major challenges, not only for the present but also for the future of our societies.

3. A PRODUCTIVE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

Strongly believing in the need for this change, and in view of the scale of the challenges and the limits of the current system of cooperation, the Commission proposed, at the Youth Council at the end of 1999, drawing up a White Paper on a new form of European cooperation in youth policy. Throughout the very wide-ranging consultation exercise leading up to this White Paper, it received the full support of the EU Member States, successive Presidencies and the European Parliament.

An unprecedented consultation exercise

This White Paper is the result of a consultation exercise spanning the period May 2000 to March 2001, involving young people from all kinds of backgrounds, youth organisations, the scientific community, policy-makers and public administrations. In terms of its scale, duration, the diversity of the people consulted and the wealth of information drawn from it, the exercise is unprecedented at European level. For some Member States it was also a first. A great many people and events were involved.

- 17 national conferences were organised by the Member States. These involved several thousand young people and resulted in 440 suggestions.
- The European youth gathering in Paris in October 2000, under the French Presidency, looked at the results of the national conferences from a more European perspective; 450 young delegates representing 31 countries reached agreement on some 80 suggestions.
- More than 60 organisations took part in hearings with the Economic and Social Committee in Brussels in February 2001.

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[12] Cf. speech by Romano Prodi on 20.7.2001 http://europa.eu.int/comm/commissioners/prodi/globalisation_en.htm).

- The scientific community, represented by a dozen or so multidisciplinary researchers, was brought in to comment on likely future developments.

- Meetings were held in all European capitals with the policy-makers and administrators and with the National Youth Councils, and two meetings of the Directors-General responsible for youth were organised (one to launch these bilateral meetings; the second to wind up the consultations).

- A meeting was held in Umeå, in mid-March 2001, under the Swedish Presidency. Young people, youth organisations, researchers and public authorities set out their priorities for political action.

- A day of debates was held in the European Parliament on 24 April 2001. Almost 300 people, mostly young people, took part.

The consultation exercise will be continued. The Belgian Presidency is organising a conference in Ghent in November 2001 which will provide an opportunity for the Commission to present the White Paper and to open the debate on its proposals.

The consultation exercise, which is analysed in detail in Annex 1, broadly confirmed the above diagnosis and supported the idea that new impetus is now needed.

All young people want policies which meet their expectations. They feel that public action taken at local, regional, national and European levels is often inappropriate and out of touch with their daily concerns. They call for a radical change in thinking and practices and, above all, they insist on being fully involved in the policy-making process.

3.1. Key messages

Four key messages have emerged from the consultation process.

➢ Active citizenship for young people

The young people who were consulted see themselves as responsible citizens. They want to be more involved in community life. They want their views to be heard on a wide variety of subjects. This will to participate must be given room for expression at various levels, from local to international; it must take several forms — active and representative — and it must not exclude any type of commitment, be it one-off or ongoing, spontaneous or organised. Moreover, this involvement cannot be limited to a single consultation and certainly not to opinion polls. It has to include young people in the decision-making process.

Participation must be encouraged, without exception, which means making it easier for those who have the greatest difficulties and providing greater access to existing structures for young people who are not members of organisations.

Information is indispensable to developing active citizenship, and it continues to be an area from which young people expect a great deal: they are aware that the areas to be covered are very broad (employment, working conditions, housing, studies, health, etc.) and go further than information on Community programmes, so their expectations firstly concern recognition that there is a need to be met. Young people have also stressed the importance of equal access, the proximity principle and high standards of ethical behaviour. In addition, emphasis has been placed on the importance of user-friendly information that involves young people in terms of both substance and distribution.

➢ **Expanding and recognising areas of experimentation**

Young people would like to see the public authorities recognise that education and training are not restricted to the traditional or formal types available. In their opinion, this crucial time in their learning experience would benefit from being viewed holistically, taking into account the non-formal aspects of education and training.

Greater emphasis should therefore be placed on mobility and voluntary service, which are still not sufficiently widespread and not properly recognised: young people consider it a priority to develop these and link them to education and training policies. They want these broader experiences to be recognised and given financial support. To be fully successful, this link between the formal and non-formal dimensions of learning must take into account the concept of individual development and use tools and methods which are appropriate to young people and which promote exchanges among peers, and forms of experimentation where the process is more important than the outcome.

➢ **Developing autonomy among young people**

For young people, autonomy is an essential demand. It depends on the resources at their disposal, primarily material resources. The question of income is therefore crucial. Young people are affected not only by policies on employment, social protection and labour market integration but also by housing and transport policies. These are all important in enabling young people to become autonomous sooner, and they should be developed in a way that takes into account their point of view and their interests and makes good use of experience specific to youth policies. As young people want to become active in society and feel that policies related to the various aspects of their standard of living impinge directly on them, they object to youth policies being limited to specific areas.

➢ **For a European Union as the champion of values**

The great majority of young people profess certain values, which are the same as those associated with European integration. They nevertheless regard the institutions as entities which are largely inaccessible and self-absorbed.

Indeed, thanks to or in spite of the diversity of their lives and their careers, young people have a sense of uncertainty and of the difficulties that they will encounter in their private and professional lives. This awareness of the fragility of their own situation no doubt explains in part their broader concern for those who are excluded. They believe that a great deal more must be done to guarantee the fundamental rights of each individual and, even more importantly, to guarantee the rights of minorities and tackle all forms of discrimination and racism by all available means.

Young people in Europe subscribe to the same fundamental values as does the European Union. They expect the EU to be in a position to meet their aspirations.

4. A NEW AMBITION

This White Paper addresses the full range of questions which were raised during the consultation exercise, regardless of the level of competence. It is true that youth policy proper is essentially the responsibility of the EU Member States and, in some countries, it is largely regionalised and is often dealt with at local level. It is the decisions made at local level which have the greatest impact on young people's daily lives. Subsidiarity must therefore apply in this field for reasons of principle and for the sake of efficiency. But this is still compatible with enhanced cooperation at European level, which would enhance the impact and coherence of national policies.

This is why the main objective of the White Paper is to give the European Union a new framework for cooperation in the field of youth that is both ambitious, fulfilling young people's aspirations, and realistic, setting priorities from among the great many issues raised during the consultation process and being mindful of the various levels of responsibility. This cooperation must be based on existing activities, it must be compatible with and supplement other current initiatives, particularly in the fields of employment, education and social integration – should this prove necessary; and it must facilitate cooperation between the various levels of responsibility and the various players. There are two main aspects to this new cooperation framework:

- application of the open method of coordination in the more specific field of youth,
- taking more account of youth in other policies.

4.1. The specific field of youth

4.1.1. The open method of coordination

Article 149 of the Treaty is concerned with contributing to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States.

Young people's concerns, as clearly expressed during the consultation exercise, cannot, essentially, be covered by the legislative option. On the other hand, the added value to be obtained from work done in common is broadly recognised by all the players. There is also a clear will on the part of the Member States to cooperate more closely.

It is for this reason that the open method of coordination is the most appropriate, and the conditions are right for it to work effectively. The method involves "fixing

guidelines for the Union combined with specific timetables for achieving the goals which [the Member States] set in the short, medium and long terms; establishing, where appropriate, quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks against the best in the world and tailored to the needs of different Member States and sectors as a means of comparing best practice; translating these European guidelines into national and regional policies by setting specific targets and adopting measures, taking into account national and regional differences; periodic monitoring, evaluation and peer review organised as mutual learning processes"[13].

The open method of coordination therefore offers, as underlined by the White Paper on Governance, a "way of encouraging cooperation, the exchange of best practice and agreeing common targets and guidelines for Member States... It relies on regular monitoring of progress to meet those targets, allowing Member States to compare their efforts and learn from the experience of others".

The open method of coordination, adapted to the specific policy field of youth, takes its lead from the open method of coordination as applied to education policy. It defines priority themes, lays down common objectives and guidelines, and provides for follow-up mechanisms.It also includes arrangements for consulting young people.

The Commission proposes the following plan.

- Acting on a proposal from the Commission, the Council of Ministers periodically decides on priority areas of common interest.

- Each Member State appoints a coordinator, to act as the Commission's interlocutor, for youth-related issues. The various coordinators submit to the European Commission details of policy initiatives, examples of best practice and other material for consideration on the chosen topics.

- The European Commission submits a summary and an analysis of this information to the Council of Ministers, accompanied by proposals for common objectives.

- The Council of Ministers sets out common guidelines and objectives for each of the topics and lays down monitoring procedures, and where appropriate, benchmarks based on indicators.

- The European Commission is responsible for periodic monitoring and evaluation, and reports on progress to the Council of Ministers for Youth.

- The European Parliament must have an appropriate role in this process and in the monitoring arrangements. The Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions also have to have the opportunity to give an opinion.

- Young people are consulted on the priority themes and on their follow-up (see point 4.1.2 "Participation").

- Applicant countries are associated as far as possible.

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13 Presidency conclusions, Lisbon European Council, 23 and 24 March 2000, paragraph 37.

The proposed open method of coordination adds to the range of Community instruments and is without prejudice to decisions which might be taken under the Treaty and which might induce the Commission, for example, to propose certain recommendations under Article 149.

4.1.2. The scope for action using the open method of coordination in the youth field

Of the various subjects regarded as being proper to the youth field, and which are suited to the open method of coordination as described above, the European Commission proposes participation, voluntary service, information, improving the public authorities' awareness of young people's concerns, and more generally any other subject which might contribute to the development and recognition of activities on the youth front (e.g. youth work, youth clubs, street work, projects to foster a sense of citizenship, integration, solidarity among young people, etc.) for the part which is not covered by other political processes such as employment, social integration and education. This corresponds very largely to the kind of activities and resources normally associated with youth policies at national level.

Implementation of this open method of coordination can draw on the analyses and proposals arising from the consultation exercise as set out in Annex 1, with a view to improving the level of cooperation in the field of youth and to responding to the various challenges.

In the interests of complementarity and coherence, the results of applying the open method of coordination should enrich and provide added value to other policies, initiatives or Community processes, in terms of both content and resources.

On the basis of the scope of action set out above, the European Commission has pinpointed the following priority themes for applying the open method of coordination – first and foremost, participation.

- **Participation**

Participation for young people is typically a concern of the Member States. Nonetheless, applying the open method of coordination will bring in European added value, particularly as enhanced participation will make a contribution to developing young people's education and citizenship.

Participation should be developed primarily in the local community, including schools, which provide an ideal opportunity for participation. It must also be extended to include young people who do not belong to associations.

The open method of coordination could lead to the introduction by local authorities of flexible and innovative participatory mechanisms and to the spread of regional and national youth councils which are open to young people who are not necessarily active in organisations.

As a strong signal to young people, the Commission also proposes strengthening a consultation structure for young people at European level. Without ruling out direct consultation mechanisms and one-off initiatives, the European Commission proposes the Youth Forum, remodelled so that it is representative of young people who may or may not belong to youth organisations, as a suitable body for consulting young

people on priority issues under the open method of coordination and their follow-up. It should also be possible to increase the representation of young people within the Economic and Social Committee.

To support the open method of coordination, the Commission believes that some measures can be put in place without delay. It intends to:

- organise direct dialogue with young people in the form of regular meetings on specific topics in the course of 2002;
- involve young people in the initiative on the future of Europe which was set in motion following the Nice European Council, from 2002 onwards;
- propose pilot projects for 2003 and 2004 in support of local, regional and national efforts to foster participation[14]. The results of these pilot projects will be taken into account as part of the mid-term evaluation of the YOUTH programme and in preparing any future programme.

- **Information**

Participation goes hand in hand with providing young people with information. It is primarily the Member States' responsibility to inform young people, for example on European affairs. That is why this subject also has to be addressed under the open method of coordination. It is important to reach the young people themselves if possible, but in any case those who come into contact with them in school, in clubs, in associations, etc. This mass information exercise will require a coordinated approach, considerable resources and the involvement of young people in devising and implementing these communication tools. This approach will be coordinated with the EU's new information policy arising from the governance principles in particular, and which is now being formulated in close conjunction with the European Parliament.

In support of the open method of coordination, the Commission believes that some measures can be put in place without delay. It intends to :

- introduce an electronic portal to give as many young people as possible access to information on Europe, at the beginning of 2002, the idea being to seek synergies between the existing sites and the planned portal;
- set up an electronic forum.

- **Voluntary service among young people**

Voluntary service is a form of social participation, an educational experience and a factor in employability and integration, and as such it meets the expectations of young people and society alike.

Using the open method of coordination, efforts should be made in years to come to develop voluntary service significantly at national, regional and local levels. In this

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14 e.g. projects using the Internet, as a complement to action under the initiative "electronic democracy" (IST Key Action 1).

context, it may be necessary to reflect upon the situation of young volunteers in terms of legal and social protection.

The positive experiences of the European Voluntary Service will be useful for making voluntary service standard practice among young people (type of supervision, methods of funding, etc.). At European level it is important to ensure that voluntary service is recognised as an educational experience and a period of non-formal learning. The European Voluntary Service scheme for young people could be widened to include a partnership with the worldwide bodies which organise and support voluntary action. The Member States should take immediate action to remove obstacles to mobility for young volunteers.

- **Greater understanding of youth**

A greater understanding of the realities which concern young people is necessary at European level. To this end, the European Commission proposes to use the open method of coordination to:

- taking stock of, and networking, existing structures, studies and research on youth which are in progress within the European Union; in the interests of complementarity, the work and initiatives of other international bodies (Council of Europe, OECD, United Nations, etc.) will be taken into account;
- focusing discussion on the right approach at European level;
- drawing up, where appropriate, a study and research programme based primarily on work carried out at national level and utilising the opportunities offered by the sixth European research framework programme[15];
- provision of the requisite statistical resources, making optimum use of resources already available under the European Statistical System[16].

4.2. Taking more account of youth in other policies

All the other subjects which were mentioned during the consultation exercise, such as employment, education, formal and non-formal types of learning, social integration, racism and xenophobia, immigration, consumer affairs, health and risk prevention, the environment, equal opportunities for men and women, etc. will require close coordination with the various authorities, at both national and European level.

Policies and action at European level will be based on the Treaty and use the various instruments available.

The European Commission will ensure that guidelines concerning young people will be taken more into account of in these policies and forms of action wherever

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15 Priority 7 of the research framework programme 2002-2006: "Citizens in an evolving knowledge society".

16 The European Statistical System (ESS) is a network made up of all government bodies which, at various levels (regional, national and Community), are responsible for gathering, processing and disseminating the statistical information needed for the Community's economic and social life. Eurostat is the focal point in the Community for the European Statistical System.

appropriate and whatever the instruments used. The results of the consultation as set out in Annex 1 will be taken into account for this purpose.

The Ministers responsible for youth policy should also ensure that youth-related concerns are taken into account in these other policies, at national level as well as in implementing European policies.

As a result of the consultation exercise, the European Commission believes that education, lifelong learning, mobility, employment and social integration, and racism and xenophobia are the priority areas in which the youth aspect has to be taken into account. The question of young people's autonomy likewise warrants in-depth examination.

- **Education, lifelong learning and mobility**

Education and training, whether at school, university or by means of any other type of non-formal learning, are addressed in communications to the Council (dealing with the objectives of education and training systems, creating a European area of lifelong education and training) and are subject to follow-up at Community level.

In line with this, youth associations, social workers and local authorities in many countries are involved in in-depth work with young people. While continuing to be innovative and non-formal, and as part of the overall package of lifelong learning measures, this work would benefit from:

- a clearer definition of the concepts, of the skills acquired and of quality standards;
- a higher regard for the people who become involved in these activities;
- greater recognition of these activities;
- greater complementarity with formal education and training.

There has also been an Action Plan and a Recommendation on mobility, which were approved respectively at the European Council in Nice in December 2000, and, via the co-decision procedure, by the European Parliament and the Council in July 2001. These initiatives must be consistent with any that might arise from applying the open method of coordination in the field of youth.

- **Employment**

The European Union has been very active on the jobs front for a number of years. Following on from the Luxembourg European Council in November 1997, it devised a European employment strategy, based on the new "employment" chapter in the Treaty of Amsterdam.

The Member States are required to implement policies which foster the integration and advancement of all on the labour market. These policies are concentrated around four main "pillars": improving employability; developing an entrepreneurial spirit and creating jobs; encouraging firms and their employees to be adaptable; strengthening equal opportunities for men and women.

As far as young people specifically are concerned, the Employment Guidelines stress the need for policies to prevent long-term unemployment based on individual counselling; improved education and training systems; reducing the number of young people who leave education and training systems prematurely; making instruction in the new technologies universally available.

- **Social integration**

The Lisbon European Council of March 2000 decided to set in place an open method of coordination to foster social integration. Based on the European employment strategy, this method combines common objectives for tackling social exclusion and poverty (adopted at the Nice European Council of December 2000) and national action plans (presented for the first time in June 2001).

Member States have been urged to set out their priorities and main political measures in their national plans, based on the four common objectives adopted at Nice: promoting participation in the employment market and access for all to the requisite resources, rights and services; preventing the risk of exclusion; taking action for the most vulnerable members of society; mobilising all players and fostering participation.

On the more specific question of young people, various aspects have been addressed, both in the common objectives and in the national action plans: developing a labour market which favours the inclusion of young people; guaranteeing adequate resources and incomes for young people in difficulties, particularly members of minorities, young women in precarious employment, and young disabled people; tackling inequalities in education; enhancing access to quality services (housing, health, culture and justice); regenerating areas suffering from multiple disadvantages.

- **Young people against racism and xenophobia**

Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam greatly strengthened efforts to combat any form of discrimination, and the European Union has acquired new resources in this field (in the form of two directives and an action programme)[17].

Young people are a particularly receptive group when it comes to tackling discrimination, more especially racism and xenophobia, and are particularly committed to a multi-cultural society.

At Community level, it is proposed that priority be given to tackling racism and xenophobia in all Community programmes and measures affecting young people. Cooperation with the European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia could be increased, and civil society action in this area will have to be supported. The Commision's work will be based on networking arrangements bringing together

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17 Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.
Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.
Community action programme to tackle discrimination 2001-2006: the programme provides support for activities designed to combat discrimination on the basis of racial or ethnic origin, religion and believes, disability, age and sexual orientation.

youth organisations active in tackling racism and xenophobia and in working towards respect for all, especially minorities. The objective is to enable young people to make their contribution to the EU global effort in this field.

At national level, the Member States should also make this issue a priority in their measures for young people. Outreach work, in the form of local projects geared towards solidarity and responsibility, must play a key role.

- **Autonomy for young people**

Given the major importance of autonomy for young people, a finding that emerged from the consultation exercise, the European Commission proposes setting up a high-level working group to advise it and the Council of Ministers, in its various configurations, on this matter. It is a complex problem which requires multi-disciplinary expertise, and the solutions require the involvement of many policies other than youth policies (employment, family, social protection, health, transport, justice and home affairs).

4.3. The role of the YOUTH programme

The aim of the YOUTH programme is to encourage young people to make an active contribution to European integration, to developing intercultural understanding, strengthening fundamental values such as human rights and combating racism and xenophobia, developing a sense of solidarity, encouraging a spirit of enterprise, initiative and creativity, stimulating the recognition of non-formal education, and strengthening cooperation on the part of all people active in the youth field. The programme is also open to the applicant countries.

The YOUTH programme has to be seen, then, as a resource for the new form of cooperation advocated in this White Paper. In full respect of the Decision[18] of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing this programme, the European Commission will propose, each year in the plan of work for the programme, priorities which accord with the guidelines established under the open method of coordination. The mid-term evaluation and the preparation of the new programme from 2007 will likewise help to ensure that the programme provides optimum support for work under the open method of coordination in the youth field.

In addition to the specific measures mentioned above, which will be developed under the YOUTH programme in response to work undertaken for the White Paper, there should be a new Internet platform on the theme of racism and xenophobia, designed for young people and if possible run by young people.

5. CONCLUSION

The White Paper suggests giving the European Union a new framework for cooperation in youth policy.

In doing so, it is responding to strong demand from all parties concerned with youth policy, including the Member States.

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[18] Decision No 1031/2000/EC of 13.04.2000.

This cooperation will draw on existing national and Community activities, but will also be based on arrangements for applying the open method of coordination in the specific field of youth, and for taking more account of youth in other policies.

Initially, the White paper will be presented to the Ghent symposium which is being organised by the Belgian Presidency, and which will bring together all parties which were consulted under this process. At the Education/Youth Council of 29 November, the Commission will present its findings to the Ministers. The White Paper will also be presented to the European Parliament and to the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee for their opinions.

The Commission will put in place the agreed cooperation mechanisms and will take upon itself the necessary follow-up and monitoring work.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1
RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION

The consultation exercise ahead of this White Paper was not only considerable in scale, creating a real momentum on the ground, but also led to a great many proposals.

These proposals are the result of dialogue and exchanges between all those involved in the field of youth, i.e. young people, representatives of youth organisations, researchers, administrators and policy-makers.

It goes without saying that young people in Europe are not all identical. Social, economic, cultural and regional differences can be seen both collectively and individually, and national and European public authorities must be attentive to this. The above proposals relate to many areas and confirm to a large extent the Commission's analysis of the challenges facing Europe in the field of youth and the need for renewed political action. The quality of the proposals opens up many avenues for action. During the consultation process, young people pinpointed five major areas:

- participation;
- education;
- employment, vocational training, social inclusion;
- well-being, individual autonomy, culture;
- European values, mobility, relations with the rest of the world.

The results below are based on these. For each of the topics, the Commission analysed the results of the consultation exercise, making every effort to reproduce what the young people said. The examples below illustrate the fact that there are already many interesting projects in the field (see boxes). However, this is neither a selection of the best nor an exhaustive description of all existing initiatives.

Finally, this section summarises the proposals addressed to the public authorities by young people and all those who took part in the consultation exercise. These suggestions are categorised according to level of intervention, many relating in fact to the Member States. In this presentation, the Commission has tried to reproduce as faithfully as possible the proposals which emerged from the consultation in order to pass them on to Europe's decision-makers. Nevertheless, the suggestions put forward, which are set out below, do not necessarily reflect the Commission's views.

1. NO DEMOCRACY WITHOUT PARTICIPATION

1.1. Analysis of the results

Participation of young people is a recurring topic on which many texts have been written both in Europe and worldwide. The consultation exercise echoed this

political will to prioritise participation of young people in various forms. It has also allowed young people to put forward proposals, but has in addition itself been an example of the participation advocated.

- ***A clear demand***

The strongest message given by young people is their will to play an active part in the society in which they live. If they are excluded, democracy is not being allowed to function properly. They regard the view that they are disinterested or uncommitted as groundless and unjust. They feel that they are given neither the resources nor the information and training that would enable them to play a more active role. Youth organisations also believe the right to participate is fundamental and must apply to all without discrimination. Many of them strive to help young people to put it into practice.

The percentage of people under the age of 25 who participate in local, national or European elections is generally quite low. However, there are plenty of indications that they take a keen interest in public life. Researchers view this gap between expectations and practice as explaining the wish and the need for greater participation. This demand is not surprising, nor is it new, but the way it is expressed has changed. Levels of involvement also vary greatly from one individual to another.

- ***A global concept, a universal right, different approaches***

Young people want the right to give their opinion on all aspects of their daily lives, such as family, school, work, group activities, their local area, etc. However, in doing so, they are also involved in broader economic, social and political issues.

Access and dialogue
"Young Voice – Llais Ifanc": Welsh Parliament initiative, which allows young people to express their views, advises on where to find information and organises debates and talks
http://www.wales.gov.uk/youngvoice

Their interest is not limited to local issues; it also concerns their region, country, Europe and the world. In other words, the right to participate should not be limited and they must be allowed to do so without restriction. So when they take action to enable young people, whether disadvantaged or marginalised, ethnic minorities or illegal immigrants, to participate more, their action is part of a wider campaign for universal participation without discrimination.

The approach taken by civil society organisations is similar, although they are required, in practice, to put the emphasis on more targeted objectives or groups (young people in their local environment, in rural areas, more vulnerable groups, young women, etc.). They advocate a more integrated and long-term approach, which means that they encourage all forms of participation and all activities based on young people's individual commitment and voluntary service.

- ***Participation of young people - a learning process***

Participation requires young people to acquire skills or improve existing skills. It involves a gradual learning process.

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The first stage, generally in their own environment (school, local district, town, youth centre, association, etc.), is crucial. It gives them the opportunity to gain the self-confidence and experience needed to reach the subsequent stages. Moreover, in the local community in particular, participation can bring about changes which are tangible, visible and verifiable. At this level young people also have the chance not only to give their opinion but also to be involved in decision-making processes.

Support for local participation

Together with 16 other Danish municipalities, the district of Østerbro in Copenhagen is taking part in a pilot project which offers a wide range of activities with a view to increasing young people's experience of democracy, their responsibility and their influence. Østerbro has set up a youth centre with a personalised advisory service, communication tools and theatrical activities. The main feature of this centre is that it is run by young people themselves. No director or committee has been appointed. It is open to all young people between the ages of 12 and 25. Membership is not required: young people come along to carry out a project which is not judged in any way, as the sole purpose of the centre is to help young people to successfully complete their projects.

In the second phase, young people become aware that a whole series of decisions affecting the local area are taken at higher levels of decision-making, in particular at European level: action therefore needs to be taken to move from one to the other by creating links and networks.

Moreover, participation allows young people to acquire skills which they must try to substantiate in various fields (economic, social, cultural, political, etc.) and various institutional contexts. The division between formal and non-formal education is perceived as counter-productive. So while school remains an excellent forum for learning and for participatory practices, it still has the disadvantage, in young people's opinion, of not taking them into account as active citizens.

- ***Participate? Yes...but how?***

Young people regard existing participation mechanisms as unsatisfactory. They are wary of some forms of representative democracy but do not have the same reservations when it comes to involvement at local level, which is more direct and immediate. Opinions on youth organisations are divided, as some regard them as the most appropriate structures for participation, while others fail to see their attraction and prefer more or less formal groups which are active at local level, youth clubs or associations, youth parliaments, etc. Very few believe that the low percentage of young people involved in public life is due to straightforward rejection of it or a deliberate strategy on the part of society.

By fostering direct participation of young people, organisations see themselves as a useful counterbalance to the institutions. Some believe that belonging to an organisation is one of the conditions of participation. Others feel that existing organisations no longer fulfil the expectations of some young people and call for innovative approaches to make them more accessible. Like young people, the organisations in the field want an increase in public funds for NGOs, in keeping with their social function.

Researchers underlined the need to revitalise organisations, which were seen as moving further and further away from young people's aspirations, given their social basis and their practices. In addition to their traditional members, they have to find ways of involving young people who do not want to belong to an organisation. New opportunities exist thanks to new communication technologies, in particular the

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Internet: these promote access to information and seem better suited to demand for participation that is gradually moving away from collective participation and towards more individual forms.

- ***Real participation as opposed to symbolic participation***

Young people object to purely symbolic forms of participation. But the consultation exercise was felt to be a good approach provided it results in their opinions and recommendations being taken into account.

> ***A White Paper "product"***
> *"Gestalte Deine Zukunft selbst!": This project consists of a discussion platform and a network for young people. The forum is run by young people themselves. All issues are addressed either in electronic format or in the form of publications on paper. The main aim is that information is circulated and ideas discussed. This initiative is a product of the national conference organised in Germany as part of the White Paper procedure. It is funded by the Ministry responsible for youth.*
> *http://www.u26.de*

Representatives of youth organisations also advocate a more systematic use of this type of consultation, including at European level. Some forms of co-management[19] – such as the kind practised by the Council of Europe – were also mentioned as forms of participation from which inspiration could be drawn.

The researchers spoke very strongly in favour of involving young people even in the decision-making processes. Mock participation could undermine their confidence in the institutions and in the institutions' ability or even will to give them a full role.

- ***Conditions of participation***

Young people take the view that a legal framework is one of the necessary requirements for real participation. What is needed is assistance for the structures involved in participation and a reference to the principle of education for democracy. Youth organisations also call for all forms of participation, both existing and innovative, to be encouraged. This presupposes recognition of, and support for, existing or new structures. Greater resources are needed, in terms of both time and money, and specific obstacles to access (social, cultural, physical, psychological, etc.) need to be taken into account, with citizenship training for all. Finally, they insist that young people's opinions and contributions be included specifically in the decisions, and that they be informed of this.

This framework could, according to young people, include setting out principles, rules or obligations on voting age and eligibility (including the question of lowering the voting age), on extending this right (to immigrants, for example), or even on introducing active citizenship training.

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19 For more than 30 years, the Council of Europe has been the only international organisation to practise a system of co-management in the field of youth. Specifically, its decision-making structures include representatives of youth organisations who work together with government representatives in order to decide on the institution's policies and programmes. These policies and programmes are submitted to the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe's main decision-making body, for adoption. This principle of co-management is drawn from the Council of Ministers' declaration of 12 January 1971 (document CM/Del/Concl (71) 196 XXII).

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Creation of a legal framework

Under the Social Initiative Fund, the city of Antwerp set up the "Jeunesse et Cité" (Youth and the city) project in 1997 to take greater account of the opinions and needs of young people in the city. To this end, a legal provision was introduced (the "Youth Paragraph"), making it compulsory to analyse the impact on young people of all political decisions taken by the municipality. Research and qualitative studies on young people's standard of living in the city are also carried out.
http://www.xs4all.be/~jesgent/index230.htm or JS@mail.dma.be

Another much-mentioned prerequisite is the need for appropriate information. However, for several years various bodies have been trying to improve the quality of information provided for young people, but do not seem to have succeeded. In general, they object not to the lack of information but to the fact that it is not very useful. Young people require specific information that meets their current needs but is also devoid of prejudice or remarks which are offensive to young people or minorities. The Internet is one of the communication tools to be developed, provided it is easy to access and inexpensive. Youth organisations also highlight the need for information that is more targeted, less centralised and an integral part of a proper strategy.

Researchers feel that the creation of a legal framework, education for citizenship and the attempt to establish a dialogue based on young people's experiences are also prerequisites for participation. But we must go beyond that, open up new areas in which young people, teachers, youth workers and administrations together organise a joint undertaking which will be truly successful only if it leads to decisions and achievements on the ground.

1.2. Proposals coming out from the consultations

Participation of young people in public life

There are two aspects to this: one is more formal and involves the mechanisms of representative democracy, the other is more informal and aims to develop new forms of participation. Only by bearing in mind both these dimensions can we make the most of the social capital that young people represent.

The courses of action proposed are based on the following principles:

- the importance of the local level;
- the need to extend participation beyond young people who belong to organisations and beyond issues specific to youth;
- school remains one of the forums for participation which must be given priority, even though the importance of non-formal learning and education is recognised;
- helping young people to participate is not restricted to asking their opinions.

At national, regional and local levels

- Widespread introduction by local authorities throughout Europe of flexible and innovative participatory mechanisms in a wide variety of contexts (schools, sports halls, associations, etc.) which allow young people themselves to choose their working methods and which rely on intermediaries. Provision could also be made,

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in accordance with the different local arrangements, for mechanisms for dialogue between the various decision-making levels and networks for the exchange of experience and best practice.

- Consolidate the fundamental role of operators in the field, their role as promoters and intermediaries in participatory processes.

- Widespread introduction of Youth Councils at regional and national levels; these must be open to young people who do not belong to organisations, and they must be independent of political powers. Regional and national authorities should consult these Youth Councils on all decisions which have a significant impact on young people.

- The national level is an essential link between local and European levels:

  - it must bring proposals and recommendations to Europe and pass on examples of best practice;

  - it is also responsible for interpreting the objectives set jointly at European level by adapting them to the specific political, institutional and organisational characteristics of the Member States.

- Member States should publicise what they intend to do to get young people involved; these priorities would also list target figures (for example in terms of target population, deadlines, etc.) and would set out monitoring arrangements.

- Following the example of the White Paper, involving young people in this process would be an integral objective.

At European level

- The European Youth Forum should become accessible not only for the youth organisations and national youth councils (and, via them, at regional and local levels) but also for young people who are not represented by these structures. An enlarged Forum of this kind would be the obvious body for dialogue with the European institutions.

- Promote networking and direct dialogue, in particular by means of regular meetings (for example on the priority issues included in the White Paper).

- Finance (with the Member States) pilot projects to support efforts made at local, regional and national levels to promote participation of young people at all levels and in all forms.

- In cooperation with the Member States, organise the way young people are involved in the debate on the future of Europe, in the wake of the Nice European Council.

- Strengthen cooperation with the Council of Europe.

- Increase the representation of young people in the Economic and Social Committee (by asking Member States to appoint more representatives from youth-related fields).

- Appoint an ombudsman for youth (also at national level).

Information and participation are inextricably linked

The aim of European action is not to increase the structures, channels and quantity of information already available but to improve the quality of information available to young people.

It is primarily the Member States' responsibility to provide young people with information, and this includes the area of European affairs. The EU supplements this information. All information measures of any kind must be based on the following principles:

- explicit recognition of a real need for information and thus for a coordinated strategy to inform young people;

- equal opportunities in terms of information;

- free access to all practical information;

- proximity, flexibility, user-friendly communication;

- high standards of ethical behaviour;

- participation of young people in designing, implementing and developing the communication tools which concern them.

An information and communication campaign for young people must be based on the following three points:

- the content of the information must be geared towards young people's expectations;

- the instruments and channels used to disseminate this information must be easily accessible and user-friendly, and the information must reach them in their main environment (schools, for the majority, but also in their local areas and on the street);

- these instruments and channels must be linked with each other (networking).

At national, regional and local levels

- Rely on people (sometimes referred to as resource persons) who are active in youth organisations, sports clubs, schools and universities, to provide young people with relevant information. Mobilise young people themselves as resource persons.

- Encourage youth information networks. At local level in particular, distribution of general information should be coupled with proper, personalised advice. At

national and regional levels there should be increased opportunities for training in how to inform young people.

- Information on Europe should be disseminated via national or regional networks, taking into account specific geographical or cultural characteristics. Calling on groups of young people when putting together information should become automatic.

At European level

- Study the feasibility of an electronic forum bringing together policy-makers and young people with a view to achieving maximum potential by linking existing interactive services and the future electronic forum. This interactive service could be used for consultations organised when drawing up and implementing Community initiatives on youth[20].

- On the basis of work already carried out by the EURODESK[21] network, promote and/or set up a single electronic gateway giving optimum access to information on Europe that is of interest to young people. Existing youth information networks and youth organisations active at European level should be invited to take part in developing this new communication tool.

- Set up/improve the system for collecting, disseminating and updating information on Europe for young people and those working with them. This action should draw on the work of existing networks. Greater emphasis should be placed on the importance of resource persons working closely with young people.

- Dissemination of information by non-electronic means must be continued, for example by direct contact with young people.

2. EDUCATION, A CRUCIAL STAGE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

2.1. An analysis of the results

Young people spend an increasing amount of time in education. Formal learning in schools, universities and through vocational training centres and non-formal and informal learning outside of these settings are equally essential in developing the skills that young people need today.

The global objectives of learning are threefold: personal fulfilment, social inclusion and active citizenship. Learning also plays a fundamental role in fostering employability. The European Union has launched a number of programmes (such as SOCRATES and LEONARDO) and initiatives (such as the eLearning action plan, a communication on "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality" and a report on the future objectives of education and training systems) which relate to

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20 This proposal falls within the scope of the *e*Learning and *e*Europe actions promoted by the Commission and is consistent with the content of the White Paper on Governance

21 EURODESK is an information service on Europe for young people. It is based on a website and relays in the Member States. This service is managed by an association that represents the interests of young people and the Member States.

education.[22] Whenever possible and appropriate, reference will be made to them in order to supplement the opinions which were expressed during the consultation process by the various actors. This will help to identify those areas in which the European Union is developing more and better action.

- ***The quality and effectiveness of education systems***

Education and training systems were strongly criticised by both young people and experts.[23] A number of Member States have carried out fundamental reforms of their school systems. Nevertheless, the quality and effectiveness of school education today has to be improved in order to ensure that young people acquire appropriate skills which enable them to become informed, active and responsible citizens and to ensure their social inclusion and readiness for working life. It was frequently stated that schools and education structures were insufficiently democratic and did not encourage participation or provide sufficient learning opportunities. It was felt that they should be open to society's economic and social realities and demands as well as European issues.

To achieve sustainable social and economic development, Europe needs citizens with some knowledge, including in science and technology. For instance, to increase the number of young people who pursue a career in science or technology, education systems have to be adapted in order to get more young people interested in science.

Many young people leave school and training before acquiring formal qualifications. The rate is still, on average, high throughout the European Union. However, attempting to motivate young people to remain in formal education and training is not the only solution which can be envisaged. Combining study, work and leisure activities with informal, non-formal and formal learning experiences, could enhance the quality and effectiveness of education and training and make them more appealing to young people.

The shortcomings in today's schools are not primarily seen as being the fault of teachers or of schools as such, but of the education system as a whole, which relies on cooperation between three actors : families, society and schools. Teachers are only one part of the school system and their role must be perceived in the wider social, political and institutional context. Nevertheless, teachers need better training and working conditions.

Whole schools evaluation
This Pilot Project involved 17 secondary schools and 18 primary schools throughout Ireland; supported by all the education partners it focused on evaluating the quality of school planning, the quality of school management and the quality of learning and teaching in the pilot schools. The results of the project confirmed the potential for successfully combining school self-review with external inspection – a milestone in school and system quality assurance.
http://www.irlgov.ie/educ

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22 For further information, see Annex 2

23 At the European level, a discussion has started on improving the quality of educational systems; see for instance the report from the Commission on the concrete future objectives of education systems, COM(2001)59 final, 31.1.2001

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- ***Access to education***

Young people point out that there are too many social and economic obstacles facing education. Improving the quality of education and training means, firstly, guaranteeing open and ongoing access to lifelong and to "life-wide" learning in all fields. Effective guidance and counselling systems should provide support to all young people, e.g. by adopting a personalised approach. Support for integrating disadvantaged young people into the education system must be intensified, for instance by guaranteeing free education from primary school to university.

As mentioned in the Communication from the Commission "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality"[24], one major task is to bring learning – or training - and learners closer together. In order to fulfill this goal, the mutual recognition of achievements is a prerequisite, alongside the development of information systems (including a better access for all to Internet and multimedia)[25]. Furthermore, more economic support is necessary to achieve positive results.

Guidance in Education
The National Centre for Guidance in Education is an agency of the Department of Education and Science in Ireland. Its main roles are to support guidance practice and services in all areas of formal and non-formal education settings and to influence the policy of the Department in the field of guidance. One-to-one guidance is provided by local projects in the various education settings.
http://www.iol.ie/ncge/faqs.html

- ***Renewal of the learning and teaching approaches***

The consultation called for a change in approach of learning and teaching. A more learner-centred approach, a stronger teacher-student relationship, the participation of young people in education, and dynamic and adaptable educational institutions should be developed. Learning processes have to be organised as "door openers" that enhance the motivation to learn and lead to a range of further options. Schools should facilitate pupils' involvement in shaping their own education and offer scope and encouragement for participation and democracy (for instance by offering the possibility of evaluating teachers).

Furthermore a "blended" (correctly mixed) education should be provided, offering a wide range of methods and material for acquiring the essential skills and tools for life-long learning. Using the Internet and multimedia, alongside theoretical classroom methods and studying at home, as well as youth activities, practical experience and work, will all be necessary. This could also be one way of making some subjects more attractive to young people, such as research and technology.

Building bridges between formal and non-formal learning
The students of Peace Child International themselves developed their own, youth-friendly edition of Agenda 21 ("Rescue Mission: Planet Earth – a children's edition of Agenda 21"), since the 'original'

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24 The Communication from the Commission on Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality (adopted in November 2001) is the result of a broad consultation process. It is based on the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning which was launched by the Commission of the European Communities in October 2000.

25 See the suggestions which have been made in the eLearning Action Plan, Designing tomorrow's education, COM(2001)172, 28.3.2001

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one seemed to be impenetrable[26]*. They also created their own Youth Indicators for Action, a set of 16 questionnaires enabling young people to investigate their own communities to see whether attitudes and statistics showed that the community was becoming more or less sustainable.*
http://www.peacechild.org/

- ***Different kinds of knowledge and skills***

In many countries the performance of education structures was severely criticised by young people. They were regarded as unable to provide enough content relevant to young people's needs and interests. Education should not be limited to the skills on which the labour market is focused. Education contributes, from an early age, to the socialisation, integration and empowerment of individuals. It is also a means of achieving personal fulfilment which can help to enhance the employability of young people. Young people demand foreign language teaching, preparation for the educational exchanges and mobility programmes run by the European Union; they are interested in many other fields such as modern information and communication technologies, particularly Internet access, and they ask for a stronger emphasis on practical subjects. Education about health issues, particularly sexual matters and parenthood, is also essential. Young people should also be encouraged to take an interest in scientific research, mathematics and technologies.

However, setting out to develop balanced, all-encompassing curricula which are not overloaded is a challenge. They should be designed to provide the necessary knowledge and skills and also to reflect the multicultural nature of our societies. Joint strategies on the part of the various organisations providing education (schools, training centres, enterprises, communities, youth work) would seem to be appropriate if we are to improve our understanding of what the new basic skills are and how they can be taught and learnt [27].

Variety lends wings
The four-day street festival, Carnival of Cultures, involving around 5000 active participants and at least 700000 spectators, takes place in Berlin every Whitsun. BVAA (Berliner Verband für Ausbildung und Arbeit) works with a wide range of disadvantaged young people from different ethnic backgrounds, and trains and supports them in moving from school or from unemployment to work. Several groups of young people representing the BVAA are involved in the Carnival of Cultures, learning a wide range of vocational, cultural, social and practical skills. Their motto reads "variety lends wings", and the subgroups adopt as their emblems various flying objects.
http://www.bvaa-online.de

- ***Recognition of qualifications and skills***

The recognition of qualifications and skills at European level is a key element in developing mobility[28]. Effective ways must be found for recognising skills acquired through formal and non-formal learning methods. The role of non-formal learning

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26 Agenda 21 is an action plan for sustainable development for the world in the 21st century. It was drawn up at the UN "Earth Summit" in Rio in 1992, a gathering of 179 heads of state and government. Sustainable development means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

27 The European Council in Lisbon in March 2000 called for a European framework for new basic skills to be provided through lifelong learning.

28 As far as higher education is concerned, a lot of progress has been made in this area with the help of the ECTS, the European Credit Transfer System, and the NARICs, the National Academic Recognition Information Centres.

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and the need for a better understanding and recognition of non-formally acquired skills through youth work should be emphasised. Furthermore, the mutual recognition and complementarity of education and vocational training as part of the education system has to improve.

The Recreational Activity Study Book.
This booklet, created in 1994 by the Finnish Youth Academy, provides help for students and young people entering working life. It is used as a logbook of projects, responsible positions held, courses taken and other recreational activities. The booklet is for young people over 13 years old. It is personal and costs EUR 5. People keep a record of merits and different skills: starting at university level, it is possible to collect extra points and/or use the merit points in lieu of part of the required studies. Experience which is logged in the Recreational Activity Study Book can also make it easier to find a job. Entries in the booklet have to be confirmed by signature and annotated by an authorised person. At the moment, about 30% of young Finnsare in the scheme.
http://www.nuortenakatemia.fi

- ***The complementary character of formal and non-formal learning***

The need for lifelong and life-wide learning has revealed over the past few years that the necessary skills can be acquired through learning in formal, informal and non-formal contexts.[29] Non-formal learning is typically undervalued as not being "real" learning.

What we learn in formal settings (schools, colleges, training centres etc) is only one part of acquiring skills. We learn in non-formal and informal settings too (e.g. in youth clubs, sports associations, within the family, in political life). Learning through civil society activities and in social environments is part of informal and non-formal learning, and takes place not just by chance, but also intentionally and in an organised way.

Young people take part in a wide range of activities outside mainstream education systems, and this too counts as non-formal learning. The youth sector has over the years gained experience in providing non-formal learning. At European level the YOUTH programme is a good example of this work and the experience it can bring.

In the consultations with young people, non-formal learning was often seen as the most positive, efficient and attractive counterpart to a largely inefficient and unattractive system of formal education. The advantage of non-formal learning lies mainly in its voluntary and often self-organised nature, its flexibility, the possibilities of participation, the "right to make mistakes", the closer link to young people's interests and aspirations. Integrating disadvantaged young people was also seen as an asset of non-formal learning.

It is becoming more and more important to develop effective and flexible ways of recognising skills acquired outside formal education and training systems. Finding the right balance in a set of tools which guarantee appropriate and satisfying solutions for certification and recognition, in accordance with the development of

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29 Formal learning is typically provided by an education or training institution and leads to certification. It is structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and is intentional from the learner's perspective. Non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, both structured and intentional. Informal learning is not provided by education and training institutions, does not lead to certification and is not structured. It is the result of daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It may be intentional but in most cases it is not (i.e. incidental/random).

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quality standards, (self) evaluation and assessment procedures for non-formal learning will be a sensitive task. Non-formal learning should not lose its open character and turn into a formal structure by imitating the formal education system.

The consultation process highlighted a lack of understanding of the benefits of non-formal learning. It is thus necessary to strengthen the awareness of key persons and institutions in society, business and politics, of the main players (the social partners, NGOs, education experts etc.) and of young people themselves in order to promote non-formal education as an integral part of learning and education.

As youth work can help young people acquire the necessary social, political and cultural skills, every effort should be made to involve them in non-formal learning activities. One of the aims of the YOUTH programme is to help develop non-formal learning for young people. However, even though it covers 100 000 young people per year, it cannot meet the high level of demand from the 75 million young people in the programme countries. The YOUTH programme therefore has a pilot function, and requires complementary action at national, regional and local level.

2.2. Proposals coming out from the consultations

A huge number of suggestions and proposals – both general and specific – have been made to improve conditions and outcomes in the education sector. The recommendations were directed towards the formal and non-formal learning and training systems.

In schools and universities

At national, regional or local level

- The participation of young people, respect for their individuality, and the idea of education for a democratic and European citizenship should be undisputed; the nature of the student-teacher relationship has to be changed; a learner-centred approach and a flexible role for teachers supporting the learning process should be encouraged.

- Access to education has to be guaranteed for all young people; a personalised learning approach geared to young people needs flexible guidance and counselling as well as appropriate information systems; education systems have to take into consideration the patchwork of lifestyles and to make it possible to combine different activities and roles.

- The quality and relevance of learning and training opportunities need to be increased.

- A greater openness to today's realities and to society is needed, i.e. more flexibility and less rigidity on the part of all concerned.

- Internet access in all schools, which must be accompanied by better methods for disseminating information with a view to creating effective tools for learning.

- Teacher education should go beyond conventional information technology skills towards "critical technological literacy".

- Schools must be given the chance to provide better facilities for teaching and learning foreign languages and for taking part in European educational exchange and mobility programmes.

- Schools and universities must be given more financial support in order to be more effective and invest more in human resources.

- Reform of teaching practices and conditions (training for the trainers, smaller classes, combination of theoretical and practical learning and teaching, interactive approach).

- Greater focus on education and training for entrepreneurship and self-employment, targeted support services and training for young (potential) entrepreneurs. Curricula must incorporate elements which prepare young people for entrepreneurship and self-employment.

At European level

- Facilitate access to European educational and mobility programmes and strengthen Community Action Programmes such as Socrates.

- Introduce measures to facilitate the transition between education systems and to promote free movement for young people throughout Europe.

- Implement the "Bologna Declaration", which aims to improve the transparency of education systems in Europe and mutual recognition of diplomas and to promote the European Community Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

- Provide students with clearer information on the European Credit Transfer System.

- Help raise the quality and effectiveness of school education through exchanges of good practices and by way of common objectives.

- The evaluation of skills should not be limited to labour market issues (such as information technologies and mathematics) but should be geared to things like socialisation, integration and empowerment.

In other (out-of-school) learning environments

At all levels

- The specificities of non-formal learning in the youth field, its objectives and tasks should be looked at in more detail, and the relevance of non-formal education and the complementary character of formal and non-formal learning should be made more visible; dialogue between the relevant actors in the field, as well as social partners, researchers and policy makers, will be needed with a view to improving the recognition of non-formal learning.

- Monitoring and evaluation tools should be improved with a view to guaranteeing quality standards.

- Training on various topics should be provided as an essential tool for guaranteeing high quality in non-formal learning. Training programmes targeted at professionals should include a European dimension.

At national, regional or local level

- The relevance of non-formal learning should be enhanced by supporting the providers and by improving their position within the learning system; the financial support for youth initiatives, youth organisations and other forms of non-formal learning should be improved.

- Further joint projects should be created including schools, training sites, enterprises and non-formal learning providers by building bridges between non-formal and formal systems.

- Youth organisations should regularly publicise the wide range of non-formal learning opportunities: documentation and public presentation of the outcomes of non-formal learning projects, should be an integral part of their activities.

At European level

- The quality standards in the YOUTH programme should be further developed in cooperation with the Council of Europe. In addition, an inventory of good practices should be drawn up and circulated; access for disadvantaged young people to non-formal education in the YOUTH programme and other schemes should be further improved.

- The funding and development of pilot joint schemes under the SOCRATES, LEONARDO DA VINCI and YOUTH programmes should help to build bridges between non-formal and formal systems.

- The validation and certification of participation in all YOUTH programme schemes should be pursued. This can be seen as a first step to be followed up in other non-formal educational settings at all levels.

- More training should be provided for "multipliers" and learning facilitators in non-formal learning.

3. EMPLOYMENT AS A MEANS OF INTEGRATING YOUNG PEOPLE BETTER

3.1. An analysis of the results

Jobs are a key element in enabling young people to find their place in society, achieve economic independence and realise their individual aspirations. A society which is not able to offer concrete labour market opportunities to young people risks a vicious circle of unemployment, marginalisation and social disruption. Giving young people access to the labour market contributes to social stability, which is viewed as the basis for economic growth and well-being. Sometimes unemployment is even considered as a violation of young people's human rights.

Access to education and vocational training and to information and guidance constitutes the central prerequisite, not only for finding a job and avoiding

unemployment, but also for finding a good and satisfying job. But this alone is not enough: solutions in other fields such as health, family, social rights, discrimination etc. have also to be taken into consideration. They play an equally important role in terms of the social integration of young people.

With the introduction of the new titles on employment and social affairs into the Treaties, the European Union acquired entitlement to develop strategies and programmes in these areas (such as the European Employment Strategy, the Lisbon Strategy on the modernisation of the European social model, the Social Agenda, the programme to fight all forms of discrimination, and the programme on social inclusion).[30] Whenever possible and appropriate, reference will be made to them in order to supplement the opinions which were expressed by the various parties during the consultation process. This will help to identify those areas in which the EU and the Member States are being asked to develop more and better action.

- ***Employment is a prerequisite for social inclusion***

Young people are very concerned about the opportunities available to them on the labour market. They feel the best way to social integration is to find a job. Young people would like to have a genuine sense of direction, guiding them to find their place in the world of work in the long term. To have a job means adult status, self-respect, money, independence and the opportunity to broaden one's social contacts. Young people who are cut off from work are losing a vital chance to get new perspectives and to integrate into a wider society[31].

Young people are willing to work, but finding a good job is getting harder. Young people know that their employability[32], and thus their chances on the job market, increase when they have a good education and skills and when they have spent some time in a school or university in another country. This puts them under growing pressure, and the level of expectations is higher than ever in terms of their mobility, flexibility, competencies and skills. With young people spending more time in education and training, they remain more dependent on their families and public institutions.

With regard to the transition between education, training and the labour market, the situation has objectively deteriorated in the past 20 years[33]. Youth unemployment rates remain high compared with general employment rates. For the year 2000, the general unemployment rate in the 15 EU Member States was 8.4% whereas the unemployment rate for young people aged under 25 was nearly double, namely 16.1%[34]. Precarious forms of employment have become more widespread. Wages have decreased compared to those of adult workers. It now takes young people much

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30 An overview on the EU's activities in employment and social affairs is given in Annex 2.

31 During the funding period 2000-2006, the European Social Fund is helping to develop and promote active labour market policies with a view to combating and preventing unemployment.

32 Improving employability is one of the four pillars of the employment guidelines which were addressed to Member States (OJ L 22 of 24.1.2001)

33 See contribution of Prof. Lynne Chisholm, University of Newcastle, Department of Education, to the Public Hearing on Youth, European Parliament, 24.04.2001 (http://www.europarl.eu.int/hearings/20010424/cult/minutes_en.pdf)

34 There are however large differences between the Member States: the youth unemployment rate in the EU for young people aged under 25 varied in 2000 from 5.1% in the Netherlands to 31.5% in Italy; see Eurostat news release no. 77/2001, 19.07.2001

longer to achieve labour market stability. Even a good educational qualification does not automatically guarantee them a job, as competition for employment has become fiercer. Success on the labour market depends very much on the personal circumstances and experience of young people.

The repetitive experience of disappointment and economic constraints, often paralleled by personal problems, can lead to mental blocking and a life on the margin of society. Any policy aimed at eradicating poverty and social exclusion must follow a preventive approach focused on young people.

Categorising young people as a specific social group is becoming increasingly difficult. Diverging social experiences and inequalities are on the increase[35]. The sense of intergenerational injustice is growing among young people who are increasingly aware of the implications of demographic change on social, health and pension systems[36]. Pension systems in particular will depend on the willingness and the capacity of young people to contribute to their funding. This will only be possible if young people have access to employment. Thus, intergenerational solidarity – and hence young people's willingness to contribute to social inclusion and to the well-being of their parents and grandparents – is being put increasingly under strain.

Young people argue that the transition from school to work should be easier. The public labour market system plays an important role in this respect and must be improved. Young people also bemoan the lack of strategic public or private partnerships to improve social inclusion, especially for those who have difficulties or are discriminated against on the labour market.

At the same time, new forms of social exclusion must be avoided in the wake of innovation and technological change. There is a high level of early school leavers, i.e. those who leave the education system with only lower secondary education at best. This might result in an intergenerational vicious circle between childhood poverty, low educational achievement and poverty in adult life. There is also a link between poverty and the risk of a technological divide: persons in the high-income groups use for instance the Internet three times more frequently than lower income groups. Thus lower income groups have less access to technology and, as a consequence, face a higher risk of being excluded from the labour market and from general, social and cultural development.

"Social mobility" as a prerequisite for formal training and employment
The "International Centre for Youth Movement" at Champeaux, France, offers some of the most excluded and disadvantaged young people in Europe a taste of „social mobility". This gives them the chance to rebuild confidence and self worth and can be a vital prerequisite for more formal training and employment.
http://ww2.jqm.cie.fr/FWYM.htm

Creation of youth employment at the local level
Via a project run by MJRC (Spanish member of the International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth), various services such as a laundry service for an old people's home, an organic poultry farm, production of organic preserved food (jam, etc) and rural tourism activities are offered

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35 cf. report presented by the researchers at the Umeå meeting (http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/ywp/umea.html)

36 There is a growing awareness of these issues at the European level; see for instance the communication from the Commission on the Future of Social Protection from a Long-Term Point of View: Safe and Sustainable Pensions, COM(2000)622 of 11.10.2000

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to the local community. The services provide opportunities for employment, especially for young people, women, migrants and handicapped people.
http://www.mijarc.org/europe/index.htm

- ***An entrepreneurial attitude helps to boost independence***

Spreading an entrepreneurial attitude among young people in everyday life (school, work, home etc.) can help young people to overcome barriers and to develop self-confidence; it will also help to create more and better jobs. In many EU Member states, there is an observable trend towards young people going into self-employment and setting up small businesses. Young people take over businesses from their parents or relatives or they start their own. Setting up a business is a way for young people to gain autonomy and flexibility, to start their own career, to question traditional business behaviour (e.g. through new management styles, less profit-oriented businesses, etc.), to apply innovative ways of thinking and doing, and thus to contribute to the economic and social development of society as a whole. This development must be promoted by giving support to young entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs and by encouraging greater entrepreneurial awareness among young people, especially through education and training.

How young people learn to start a company
The Swedish non-profit organisation "Communicare" encourages the spirit of entrepreneurship among young people in order to make them job-creators instead of job-takers. Young people from 18 to 25 years learn how to start, run and wind up a company through a combination of theory and practice.
http://www.communicare.nu

- ***Better information, education and training is needed***

Young people criticise the lack of information on labour market issues in particular. They also feel that access to the labour market is largely – though not totally – determined by the level of education and vocational training. Once at work, young people continuously have to improve their qualifications and skills in order to adapt to the changing patterns in working life.

Young people do not think that formal education systems prepare them for the challenges of the labour market. They perceive a gap between the (private) labour world and the (public) education and training sector. Building bridges between these sectors would help solve their difficulties concerning the length of their education and the money they have to spend on it. Young people are interested in information from social and economic organisations (trade unions, employers' organisations etc.), but think that what they have to offer is often poor and falls short of their needs and expectations. They would like to see trade unions and employers' organisations become more attractive to the young.

Non-governmental organisations think that better information and awareness campaigns are needed for young people in the fields of training, career guidance and social rights in order to prepare them better for the job market. Also information on aspects which are indirectly linked to the labour market situation of young people – for instance, information on the rights of ill or pregnant young workers – must be made more accessible.

Continuing education without financial loss

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In Luxembourg, the study leave system allows workers under the age of 30 to leave their jobs for a set period in order to continue their education. This does not result in any financial loss for either the employee or the employer, as the State pays the employer compensation equivalent to the employee's salary.
http://www.snj.lu/s_conge_education.asp

- ***Young people need specific social protection***

Young people believe that more has to be done in terms of social legislation at European level[37]. Access to the labour market has become more difficult and the requirements in terms of knowledge, work experience, geographical and personal flexibility have increased considerably. However, social rights – especially the legislation addressed to young people's specific needs – have not kept up with the growing pressure from the labour market. There is still discrimination with regard to ethnic minorities, women, disabled young people etc.[38]. Young people are therefore in favour of a more "social Europe".

According to young people, the main objective of governments and the European Commission must be to achieve full employment in the EU[39]. They propose ways and means of meeting this target: the reduction of working time, or the use of working time reduction as a means of helping people to integrate into the labour market, a minimum income and financial support to finish their studies, improved and extended public employment programmes etc. There is also a perceived need for a European status for trainees.

Non-governmental organisations are concerned about the trend in youth employment towards largely precarious and unprotected jobs, such as student work, seasonal jobs, training, short-term or fixed-term contracts. Young people are quite often exploited, receive low payment and suffer accidents at work. All over Europe young people are over-represented in specific branches (such as fast food restaurants, courier services, service suppliers etc.) or in new types of jobs (tele-working, working at home). It is in these sectors that the traditional social dialogue between the social partners is less developed and therefore the working conditions are less regulated by contracts.

Know your rights

37 As part of its Social Policy Agenda (COM (2000) 379 of 28.6.2000), the Commission outlined a wide range of measures, e.g. realising Europe's full employment potential by creating more and better jobs, action on modernising and improving social protection, promoting social inclusion, strengthening gender equality and reinforcing fundamental rights and combating discrimination, and measures geared to preparing for enlargement and promoting international cooperation and making the social dialogue help to meet the various challenges.

38 In June 2000, the Council decided, on the basis of Article. 13 TEC, on a directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. In November 2000, the Council established, on the basis of the same article, a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (OJ L 303 of 2.12.2000) and decided on a Community action programme 2001-2006 to combat discrimination (OJ L 303 of 2.12.2000). The Action Programme supports activities combating discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

39 The strategy decided by the European Council in Lisbon explicitly stated that it should "enable the Union to regain the conditions for full employment". The goal of full employment is reiterated in the employment guidelines for 2001, in which the Commission suggested concrete measures on how to achieve this aim.

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The "Know your rights line" is a telephone line of the British Trade Union Congress (TUC) especially set up for young workers to access information about their employment rights. The TUC is planning a campaign to promote employment rights amongst young workers.
http://www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/rights_main.cfm

Very often young people do not earn enough to be financially independent: they have to live at their parents' until their late twenties or early thirties and depend on support from them[40]. Furthermore, young people very often experience stress and pressure at work. This is particularly true for young couples with children and single parent families. In practice, young people are unaware of their rights and do not really participate in collective agreements. It follows that the regulatory framework has to be improved in order to take into consideration the specific needs of young people.

Protection is especially needed for those who do not take part in the labour market. Without such protection, especially for the disadvantaged, young people cannot experience youth as a transition period between child and adulthood and as a phase of social experimentation, developing creativity, personality, own opinions, responsibility etc.

3.2. Proposals coming out from the consultations

Employment

At national, regional or local level

To enhance and reinforce national, regional and local measures as part of the European Employment Strategy.

- Improving labour market related information and counselling for young people:
  - Develop user-friendly information and counselling services geared to the needs of young people.
  - Include decision-makers and employers at local level in information and counselling services for young people.
  - Develop concrete information resources for young people on job vacancies, working conditions, social protection etc. at the national, regional and local level.
  - Circulate information in places where young people spend most of their time, such as in schools, universities, employment agencies, clubs, youth centres, etc.
  - Develop specific youth information units within existing information services and guidance systems, geared to local specificities and personal action plans.

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40 Revealing statistic: 20% of young people who have a job say they receive most of their income from their parents. When young people are asked why they now live with their parents for a longer period, almost 70% give financial reasons: they could not afford to live on their own. Between 1997 and 2001, the importance of parents as a source of income increased, in some cases significantly, in all EU countries except Ireland and Finland. More than one in two young people say they receive most of their income from their parents or family (7% more than in 1997). Source: EB2001, ibid.

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- Urge trade unions to become more attractive to young people.
- Encourage employers to assist in career planning.

- Improving the scope and quality of vocational training:
  - Extend apprenticeship and trainee schemes.
  - Teach a broad range of skills in vocational training.
  - Improve training for languages and IT skills.
  - Supervise training institutions and evaluate training schemes offered to young people.

- Facilitating young people's access to vocational training, especially for people who are disabled or socially excluded or face the risk of social exclusion:
  - Offer free training.
  - Improve the vocational training of professionals working for them.

- Improving the transition from training to employment:
  - Offer opportunities for studying or training on the job, jobs for students, evening classes or dual systems of vocational education and training.
  - Provide support for employment-generating associations.
  - Set up strategic public/private partnerships in order to improve the labour market integration of young people.
  - Reduce gender-specific professional choices and income gaps between various types of work.
  - Enable young people during the transition period from school to labour to deal with the "dual status" of being trainee/student/pupil and worker/employee.
  - Introduce an end-of-study scholarship scheme.
  - Improve the quality of jobs for young people.

- Facilitating young people's access to entrepreneurship:
  - Reduce/remove any obstacles in the field of administrative and tax burden, fiscal and financial rules, economic and social regulations etc. which may impede self-employment and the setting up of small businesses by young people. Facilitate young people's access to financial resources and to counselling services.
  - Give financial and logistical support to young entrepreneurs.
  - Lighten the social security burden for young self-employed people.

At European level

- Achieving full employment for young people must continue to be a major objective of the Member States and the European Commission:
  - Strengthen the youth-specificity of EU policies by improved co-ordination between the different levels of decision-making and between the various fields of action.
  - Involve civil society and target groups in regular consultations on the European Employment Strategy.
  - Support innovative projects for the re-integration of young unemployed people.
  - Provide information on job/training opportunities and on occupations and professions which are recognised throughout Europe.
  - Improve the European status of young trainees.
  - Develop an Internet-based information site specifically addressed to the needs of young people.
- Improving the systems for transferring and recognising occupational skills and competencies between Member States:
  - Improve and integrate recognition systems (e.g. ECTS, NARICs, Europass)[41].
  - Recognise and support skills and competencies acquired in another EU Member State or under voluntary service or non-formal learning schemes.

Social inclusion

To enhance and reinforce national, regional and local measures as part of the European Social Inclusion Strategy.

- Giving young people access to resources, rights and services:
  - decent and healthy housing;
  - appropriate healthcare;
  - other public and private services, e.g. in the field of justice, culture, sport and leisure;
  - access to these new resources, rights and services geared to the particular needs of young people with social and economic difficulties;

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41 ECTS: European Credit Transfer System, NARICs: National Academic Recognition Information Centres, Europass: passport setting out knowledge and experience acquired in formal and non-formal contexts.

- "second chance" opportunities for young people who drop out of tailor-made schemes (such as in rehabilitation, vocational training, etc).

- Developing preventive approaches to address the causes of the social exclusion of young people at a very early stage:

  - Focus on individual needs through a more people-centred approach.

  - Give special attention to the needs of young people at local and regional level in terms of health centres, guidance/counselling, cultural activities, sports, day nurseries, housing, transport, etc., especially for those who are socially excluded or face the risk of social exclusion (such as young single parents).

  - Improve the social inclusion of ethnic minorities.

  - Enhance conflict resolution with the help of social workers.

  - Ensure that policies focusing on working conditions, on social rights and on social welfare are systematically implemented.

- Reforming the social security systems and social legislation:

  - Ensure intergenerational solidarity in pension schemes.

  - Eliminate discrimination in social welfare systems (e.g. against women, disabled young people, ethnic minorities).

  - Take into account the needs of young people, especially those who are disadvantaged, in social legislation in areas such as precarious work contracts, flexible working hours, equal payments, accidents at work, access to care facilities for young families.

  - Provide young people with information on their rights and social protection.

<u>At European level</u>

- Giving priority, in terms of social inclusion measures, to the needs of the most vulnerable young people[42];

- Stepping up work on the social inclusion of young people, with the help of European programmes[43];

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42 In June 2000, the Commission submitted to the Council and the Parliament a proposal for a pluriannual programme to encourage cooperation between Member States in the field of social inclusion policies (COM (2000) 368 of 16.6.2000). The programme's aim is to develop an integrated approach to social exclusion which links different policies such as employment, social protection, education and training, health and housing. Specific target groups are not mentioned in the programme. The final decision on the programme depends on the outcome of the co-decision procedure between the Council and the European Parliament.

43 Many European programmes and funding lines, such as YOUTH, LEONARDO, SOCRATES, anti-discrimination, etc, focus on young people from a disadvantaged background. The European Social

- Contributing to young people's social inclusion by using an approach based on pathways and stepping stones in European-level employment programmes and policies.

4. GETTING THE MOST OUT OF BEING YOUNG

4.1. Analysis of the results

During the consultation it became clear that there are a wide range of complex issues affecting the well-being and autonomy of young people. The environment, immigration, the media, legal systems, health, drug consumption, sexuality, sport, personal safety etc. all refer in one way or another to aspects which affect young people's lives and have an influence on their involvement in the public domain, in education or in finding a job. For instance the health of young people – or issues related to it, such as drugs, sexuality, personal safety, nutrition etc. – determines to what extent young people are willing and able to go to school or to pursue a course of vocational training. In addition, the way the "adult world" deals with these issues has an impact on young people's perception of society and the chances which they feel society is offering them. A society which, in the eyes of young people, is not able to deal with, say, environmental problems or in which environmental solutions remain pure rhetoric, does not encourage active citizenship.

- ***Well-being is based on justice and non-discrimination***

Young people have a very open concept of well-being. They believe that their self-development and autonomy depend on a propitious social environment which is non-discriminatory, equitable and safeguards diversity. A direct line is drawn between, on the one hand, the welfare of individual young persons, and on the other society's struggle against any form of intergenerational injustice and unjustified exclusion and discrimination of any social group and the struggle for more justice and an equitable distribution of means and opportunities at world level.

Welfare systems and health services should as a matter of principle be accessible to everyone on equal terms and without discrimination. This means that the specific situation of disadvantaged people has to be fully taken into account. Young people with physical and intellectual disabilities still suffer from bad social and economic conditions. Wheelchair users have difficulties in getting access to cultural events. Other young people with disabilities have no access to the Internet; they suffer from an insufficient infrastructure for physical exercise and sports, and there is very often limited social acceptance and support for self-advocacy groups.

"Simply euro"
The aims of this project are to evaluate the present situation and training on the use of the Euro for people with intellectual disabilities in the 15 Member States of the European Union and to promote information on the Euro for people with intellectual disabilities, their families and professionals.
The project produced a guide, an easy-to-read website (with incorporated use of symbol languages), and an educational video on the Euro
http://www.fvo.nl/html/euro/irish/project.htm

Fund supports measures at the national level which "support the occupational integration of young people"

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There is empirical evidence, backed by the consultation in general and by researchers in particular, that new social inequalities and cultural divisions between groups of young people are emerging in Europe. Today's reality is characterised by, on the one hand, an increasing uniformity of young people's lifestyles (music, clothing etc.) and on the other hand by a growing polarisation of opportunities, which add to the tensions which already exist between generations, genders, different ethnic groups and regions of different economic wealth. In Europe's poorer societies in particular, processes of modernisation are selective and often work only to the benefit of a small strata of the youth population.

- ***Autonomy requires income, social protection and housing***

Young people consider the lack of financial resources as the most important obstacle to social integration, well-being and autonomy, and advocate a comprehensive reform of the public welfare and social security systems, to ensure that all young people, irrespective of their status in society and on the labour market (including those who are not in school or are unemployed), receive adequate coverage on equal terms. The services must be easily accessible, even in sparsely populated areas. Young people should receive more and earlier information on their social protection situation.

There is an acute shortage of affordable accommodation which would allow young people to move away from home and live independently or start their own family. This need was stressed with a view to closing the existing gaps in social security cover for young people, e.g. for those with "zero status". Transfer payments and/or a minimum income irrespective of social status and employment are seen by young people as important steps to enable them to become increasingly independent.

> ***"L'Étage" – help for young people with difficulties***
> *The primary objective of "L'Étage" is to cater for young people in extreme difficulties, to allow them to develop and to respect their dignity. Young people can come and obtain a meal twice a day for a nominal sum. The centre tries to find accommodation or shelter, but it can also be used as a mailing address for official papers (such as CVs) and for obtaining health insurance benefits.*
> *Association Espérance, 19, quai des Bateliers, F - 67000 STRASBOURG, tel ++33 388 3570768*

- ***Improving mental and physical health and avoiding drugs***

The main conclusion of the consultations is that there is a widespread demand for preventive health information and education for all, as part of the school curricula and within the context of youth work. Youth work has an important role to play as a supportive element for the personal development of young people. Peer education programmes and the active cooperation of young people in other programmes are also valuable instruments. Prevention work should promote positive, healthy lifestyles. Young people need to be more aware of their responsibility for their own bodies, e.g. eating habits.

> ***"MAHIS – Chance is inside you"***
> *Mahis is a Finnish cooperation programme that helps young people to manage their own lives and provides support from adults and positive peer group socialisation. The aim is to strengthen self-confidence and confidence in the future. Mahis offers alternatives to drugs and role models for dealing with social pressure.*
> *http://www.nuortenakatemia.fi/*

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Young people are keen on more information on all issues linked to health, personal development, consumer goods and environmental questions. This information should be provided in schools[44], in youth work, counselling services and the media. Access to health services should be free and provided without discrimination. The creation of youth-specific health care facilities is seen as a necessary prerequisite.

Public health policies should put more emphasis on health problems affecting young people in particular. More scientific studies, statistics and media reporting on the health situation of young people are needed if there is to be real progress.

Smoking and drinking, as well as the abuse of legal medical substances, are regarded as major problems. The amount of nicotine, alcohol, sweet and fatty food being consumed by young people is rising steadily. High suicide rates among Europe's youth are indicative of persistent problems of well-being.

Young people believe that drug addiction should be recognised as an illness not as a crime, and be treated accordingly. They emphasise the need for more widespread and effective prevention programmes, especially through peer group prevention and counselling services and with the help of proper treatment and re-education facilities. Information input from parents is seen as an integral part of these efforts. However, views differ regarding the precise direction drug policy should take. In some countries a majority of young people favour a stricter attitude to drugs, including cigarettes and alcohol. In others young people advocate the depenalisation of cannabis consumption, production and selling, and of its by-products for medical and practical reasons, usually coupled with the clear demand for a continued or reinforced ban on hard drugs.

On mental health, more preventative efforts (especially counselling services) and care facilities, specifically targeted at young people, are called for. There should also be fuller statistics on the situation of young people suffering from mental illness.

"Penumbra" – support for mentally disabled young people
Penumbra is a Scottish voluntary organisation active in the field of mental health for 15 years. It aims to encourage young disabled people to develop skills and confidence, to discuss difficult issues in their lives and to get them to recognise that power comes from within. Over the years, "drop-in services" and a wide range of support groups (eating disorders, drug and alcohol misuse) have developed. http://www.penumbra.org.uk/youngpeople/youngpeoplecontent.html

- ***More openness on sexuality***

Young people see sexuality as an important aspect of their well-being and personal autonomy. They perceive a need for more information on sexuality, particularly sexual education, contraception, sexual diseases etc. This information should be provided in school as well as outside school in non-formal learning environments such as youth organisations, leisure and sports facilities etc.

The Nordic Resolution on Adolescent Sexual Health and Rights
The "Nordic Resolution" has been developed by the Family Planing Associations of Five Nordic countries, on the basis of the Programme of Action of the UN International Conference on Population

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44 In order to promote a better health for young people, the European Commission, the World Health Organisation and the Council of Europe are working together in the framework of the "European Network of Health Promoting Schools" (ENHPS). This network is a concrete example of an awareness campaign which was successfully held thanks to the joint efforts of these three organisations, in order to achieve their common goals of health promoting.

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and Development, which was adopted in Cairo in 1994. It is an important advocacy tool to show that giving young people accurate information will not encourage them to have sex, but that if they do have sex it is more likely to be safe.
http://mirror.ippf.org/cairo/issues/9906/nordic.htm

Young people advocate equal access for all young people, whatever their cultural background, to information and counselling, as well as to contraception and sex education. They also advocate the legalisation of abortion. Indeed, teenage pregnancy is singled out as a specific problem which must be dealt with.

All forms of sexual exploitation, like sex tourism or child abuse, are strongly and unequivocally rejected. Intolerance against certain sexual orientations is widely criticised and rejected. Young people are in favour of more positive measures to raise awareness of sexual diversity.

Sex education provided by other young people ("peer education") can help to overcome difficult family situations or reach people who find it difficult to talk about sexuality. Specific educational methods are needed for young girls from ethnic minorities and/or those with a disadvantaged background, since for some of them maternity still constitutes the only means of social integration.

- ***Family and gender issues need more attention***

Young people think that only little progress has been made over recent decades concerning gender equality. There is a perceived need for a more equitable relationship between men and women in society and for a heightened awareness of gender-specific stereotyping and role definitions. Young people think that there is a need for a reconsideration of traditional gender roles, particularly in areas of high unemployment and low public (child care) services.

Mobilising Young Women for Equality in Europe
In September 1999 the European Women's Lobby (EWL) started a project called "Mobilising Young Women for Equality in Europe". Its aim is to support the integration of young women's concerns into European and national policy developments by involving more young women in organised actions and decision-making.
http://www.womenlobby.org

Reconciling family and work is considered to be one of the main challenges for the future, e.g. the provision of parental leave and improved childcare facilities. In this context attention has to be given to the specific needs of girls and young women, particularly regarding their health and safety. Violence against women is still frequent, and something has to be done about it. Under certain stressful situations, young women are more likely than boys or young men to suffer from specific diseases such as bulimia and anorexia nervosa. Many young people call for stronger material and moral support from families, including for non-married couples with children.

- ***Expressing one's own culture***

Young people stress the important role that all forms of cultural activity play in their well-being and personal development. They suggest making changes to educational curricula, non-formal learning and the cultural policy of public authorities. They consider cultural youth learning as a powerful means of developing the kind of social skills which are necessary for the advancement of the knowledge society.

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Club 15-29 – artistic activities for young disadvantaged people
The "Club 15-29" in Greece is targeted at boys and girls who do not participate in any kind of organisation. This "Club" is an umbrella for all recreational programmes for young people. One objective is to reach out to young people from remote areas or to people with disabilities with a view to eliminating cultural and educational inequalities and running projects involving deaf and blind young people in artistic activities, such as theatre.
http://www.neagenia.gr/club1529b.html

However, young people are against information overload and commercialisation, both of which are seen as endangering youth culture. They see themselves as the target of commercial forces which are trying to influence their behaviour as consumers. This can lead to situations where young people are urged to earn money at an early age to keep up with the market's stereotyped role models.

At a time when the distinction between youth and adult cultures is becoming blurred, new cultures moving and sometimes heterogeneous have developed. It is assumed that new cultural patterns will be less age-bound than they are today. However it remains to be an important task to enable young people to shape and express their own cultures.

- ***Young people want to be safer and know more about the environment***

Young people see safety in inner-city areas and the prevention of road accidents as important issues, along with the special problem of safety risks at work. There is therefore a need higher standards and better regulatory mechanisms.

Environmental issues are of great interest to young people and have a major impact on their living conditions and well-being. Many young people are aware of the importance of a healthy environment and would like to know more about this and about what sustainable development means in practice. This is in line with the objectives of the Sixth Environment Action Programme[45], which aims to promote environmental education and looks into ways of raising environmental awareness. This covers the inclusion of environmental issues in school curricula and the development of educational programmes to advise people on adopting greener lifestyles.

4.2. Proposals coming out from the consultations

At national, regional or local level

- Material conditions of well-being:
  - greater efforts to improve the housing situation;
  - an adequate socio-cultural infrastructure for all young people, including those from low-income backgrounds and rural areas.
- In the area of health and drugs policy:
  - non-discriminatory access to health services;

[45] COM(2001) 31 final of 24.01.2001

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- general improvement in health care facilities;
- promotion of health education (including consumer-related issues);
- stronger support for information and prevention programmes;
- improved communication and awareness building in the media;
- peer group information and counselling;
- parental information;
- better treatment for drug addiction, preferably in special centres;
- more support for health research and statistical data.

- Other issues (mental health, sexuality, family, gender issues, personal safety):
  - improved medical coverage in the field of psychological and psychosomatic diseases;
  - better counselling at an earlier age and the creation of special mental health care facilities;
  - better re-integration programmes for young people suffering from mental diseases;
  - better access to information and counselling in the field of sexuality;
  - more support for contraception and family-planning programmes;
  - improved/expanded therapy facilities for the victims of sexual exploitation and violence;
  - better material and organisational support for families, especially regarding affordable child-care facilities;
  - equal and free access to sexual and parenthood health services for all women;
  - stricter criteria and enforcement of safety at the workplace;
  - special training facilities for young drivers;
  - attractive public transport services, even at unusual hours;
  - raising awareness of environmental issues and supporting environmental education in formal and non-formal learning.

At European level

The European Union is urged to focus more on two main lines of action: to set certain standards and to gear policies and programmes more closely to the needs of young people.

- Assuming that the European Union is able to set certain standards, four groups of standards were suggested:
  - standards for adequate social security coverage for all young people, free of discrimination and based on the principle of intergenerational justice;
  - standards for health care for all young people, free of discrimination, emphasising the role of prevention and flexible enough to take full account of the special needs of certain groups of young people;
  - standards for a European policy on substance abuse, which takes account of today's realities, which covers the entire range of legal and illegal substances and which treats drug dependence as an illness and not as a crime;
  - European standards for child-care facilities and parental leave as a means of promoting a policy of gender equality and support for the family.
- The European Union is urged to take better account of the interests of young people when devising and executing European policies and action programmes:
  - More European initiatives are requested in the field of youth information, particularly in those areas which help young people to become autonomous citizens.
  - European policy should aim at safeguarding the existing plurality of cultures and lifestyles in Europe.
  - Better accessibility to the LEONARDO, SOCRATES and YOUTH programmes for disabled and disadvantaged young people, and more support for cultural products which are accessible to people with visual and hearing impairments.
  - Gender-specific data on diseases in the EU are needed.

5. A EUROPE BASED ON VALUES

5.1. Analysis of the results

For 15-25 year olds, Europe has many faces, including Tower of Babel, bureaucracy and money machine, but it is also a place to meet and exchange views, and it is the champion of democratic values.

- ***Europe in the world***

Both individually and collectively, young people reject the idea of a Europe that is merely a large economic free-trade area competing with North America or South-East Asia. The aim of the Community enterprise is not to create a "fortress Europe" built on the positions and reactions of the past: Europe's domination of other continents at certain times in history must not be used as an excuse for continuing along this path. On the contrary, Europe must prove that it is open to the rest of the

world and position itself as a cultural crossroads, an area of tolerance and mutual exchange.

It is also evident that, for young people, Europe means much more than the European Union. They support enlargement even though they are fully aware that the accession of the applicant countries, the transition of these former communist regimes to democracies and of highly-planned economies to market economies will in some cases result in a precarious situation for young people in those countries.

- ***Europe, a champion of values***

Young people and youth associations continue to be attached to the European ideal based on peace, prosperity and democracy. It is obvious to all that the clear affirmation of an area of rights and freedoms is much more necessary today than that of an economic Europe. Nor are young people and their associations indifferent to the idea of unity in diversity.

The question of fighting discrimination came up in all the discussions. Solidarity, equality and multiculturalism are values which were unanimously endorsed. They are at the heart of European integration but also of cooperation with the rest of the world. All participants thus wished to create a European common policy to protect universal fundamental rights.

Young people demand that the anti-discrimination clause in the Amsterdam Treaty (Article 13) be applied scrupulously; this authorises the European institutions to take measures to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. This article was first formalised in the action plan against discrimination, the key objective of which is to mobilise people so as to change practices and attitudes. These efforts must be continued.

Young people also fear certain effects of globalisation which could result in the emergence of, or increase in, inequalities between populations and regions throughout the world. They are extremely concerned about trafficking in human beings, which is an international consequence of impoverishment.

Creation in Portugal of the solidarity fund "Youth Cards for Timor" or how to achieve solidarity using what is basically a consumer product. There are two types of Youth Cards: the standard card costs EUR 6 and the "MegaCartão Jovem" costs EUR 12. Since 1 June 1999, for each standard card bought, EUR 0.50 is donated to projects carried out in East Timor; for each "Mega Card" the amount donated is EUR 1.
http://www.timorlorosae.fdri.pt/campanhas/cartaojovem.htm

- ***Tackling racism and xenophobia***

There are two aspects to this: prevention and a firm stance (zero tolerance) in relation to all extremist behaviour.

In general, young people are open to others, sensitive to the problem of racism and prepared to play their part. But they also feel particularly vulnerable to any perceived manipulation.

Political action must therefore be mindful of the following principles.

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- Education, employment and social integration are prerequisites in guarding against racism and xenophobia.
- Participation of young people, especially minorities and grassroots projects, and non-formal learning and education are the best resources.
- Information provided BY young people is the best way of raising young people's awareness, particularly in this area.
- Support for networks at all levels and the development of new communication channels between them is an appropriate instrument for further action.

All different / all equal
Campaign against racism and intolerance, organised by the Council of Europe in 1996. This campaign provided excellent resources and motivation for education by peers in tackling exclusion. Despite its short duration, the campaign produced valuable educational material that is still used in youth organisations in Europe.
http://www.ecri.coe.int/

The European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO)
This is a European network of young trainers to counter racism and xenophobia. Its aim is to provide young people and in particular the leaders of youth movements with educational tools to allow them to run workshops on respect for multicultural diversity. This network is present in ten European countries.
http://www.ceji.org/new/epto/frameset2.html

- ***A Europe in which young people want to participate***

Young people and their representatives demand a Europe that pays attention to their concerns, a Europe that is free of exclusion and stigmatisation. They regard Europe as an area free of borders for ease of study, travel, work and daily life. Finally, they want it to be an ideal place for laws to protect the environment, safeguard heritage, combat all forms of extremism, strengthen social rights, equal opportunities, etc.

Europe remains a work in progress, formed both by major political progress and by various small steps in the form of action on the ground. Some young people deplored its shortcomings, pointing to incomprehension and complexity; others expressed hope. But all of them wanted to participate in European integration by voicing their opinions publicly on issues which interest and/or affect them, not only as young people but also as citizens. However, simply listening to them would not be enough.

Associations which by their nature are required to enter into contact with the Community institutions more often (grant applications, entering projects in programmes, etc.) deplore the complexity in existing structures. Concerning a more global technical assistance in an extended youth policy, the European Youth Forum called for the creation of an agency.

InfoMobil - Practical information on European countries
InfoMobil is a Web service provided by the ERYICA Youth Information Network. Areas covered are study, employment, training, housing, culture and sport, leisure, health, youth information services, social services, transport, etc. in more than 20 countries.
http://www.eryica.org/infomobil/

This distance between the younger generations and Europe seems to be such that researchers warned repeatedly against certain widespread ideas that the young people

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of today would be the "first real Europeans". Many young people remain firmly rooted in their local environment and their national outlook. The road to strengthening European awareness and citizenship is a long one which will require a great deal of patience.

Putting Europe into practice with "Euregio Meuse-Rhine" and the EFI network - Euregional leisure and information association for young people.
Euregio is a multilingual and multicultural region consisting of three countries - Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands - which links the cities of Liège, Maastricht and Aachen. Its motto is that everyone must participate in the construction of Europe. This means that young people have to be given the opportunity, during their free time and together with other people across borders, to get to know the people of their surrounding area. EFI organises not only seminars and other discussion activities for children, young people and anyone working in the socio-educational field, but also workshops and other creative activities to encourage participation among young people.
http://www.efi-aachen.de/f/frames_f.htm

Mindful that decisions are increasingly being taken at European level, young people want to become involved in Europe. They want a new European youth initiative and greater coordination of national youth policies, they want young people to be taken into account in the various policies which affect them, and they want to ensure that they are not systematically regarded as a problem but as a factor in solving the problems which these policies aim to resolve.

- ***Mobility - the main asset of European integration***

Two points have emerged:

- The first, which is positive and encouraging, is that mobility is becoming increasingly widespread. The added value it brings is now widely recognised. Whether it is defined as being between countries or between rural and urban areas, whether it concerns millions of European students or young people undergoing training, whether it concerns young people with disabilities or from minority groups or disadvantaged backgrounds, mobility opens up access to the world and enriches our experiences.

- The second point is less positive. Obstacles remain because of a lack of information at all levels, psychological barriers (stereotypes), certain practices (visas), the lack of equivalence in qualifications and recognition of experience, and a lack of language skills. Mobility therefore remains restricted to a minority of young people.

It has to make this transition from the exception to the general rule: mobility must become an integral part of learning from a very early age. Programmes must therefore be accessible to all young people regardless of their socio-economic or geographical origin.

To achieve this, new funding is needed, partners must become more involved, and quality criteria must be established. While Community programmes have made it possible to acquire experience and have lead the way, they will nevertheless be unable to continue alone, due to limited resources, to fulfil their role of promoting mobility. Greater coordination of the various levels of decision-making is essential.

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- ***Voluntary service - a response to young people's needs***

Young people regard voluntary service, i.e. any kind of unpaid work, as a means of acquiring skills and experience which they will be able to develop in their professional life. However, in their view, voluntary service is not a substitute for paid employment.

It also reflects changes in society; voluntary service provides young people with an area in which to socialise, but society too benefits from these non-market activities for which demand has increased in recent years. There has been frequent mention of setting a target of 30% participation in voluntary activities. In some countries, these new forms of participation have become popular as a result of compulsory military service coming to an end.

Finally, voluntary service is both a form of social participation and an educational experience. It is a factor in social integration and a very tangible way of countering prejudice. It is potentially universal and must remain open to all. It is therefore an exemplary response to the wishes expressed during the White Paper consultation exercise.

Voluntary service can be at local, national and European levels. At European level, it plays an essential part in creating a European identity and should be an effective tool in bringing people together when new Member States join.

All of the work carried out in this field within the Council of Europe[46], as part of national civilian service schemes, in the EU's Council of Ministers (the subject is being discussed right now), within the European Union's YOUTH programme or in the United Nations[47] points to the development of voluntary service.

Voluntary social or ecological year
In Germany, a federal law concerning the Voluntary Social Year (Freiwilliges Soziale Jahr-FSJ) enables young people (16-27) to carry out full-time activities in a social welfare, care or educational project for a period of 6-12 months. In 1993 the law was amended to include the Voluntary Ecological Year (Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr -FOJ). The law ensures that young volunteers continue to receive benefits during their period of service (such as family allowance and bonus points for university placements) and that social insurance credits are paid for them by the host organisation. The law places special emphasis on the educational value of the year by setting minimum support standards for the volunteer.
http://www.ijgd.de

5.2. Proposals coming out from the consultations

Relations with the rest of the world

At European level

The following proposals emerged from the consultations, particularly with young people:

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46 cf. European Resolution on young volunteers involved in youth policy
47 cf. 2001 – International Year of Volunteers

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- To ensure that people everywhere are given the same opportunities for welfare and development:
  - reduce third-world debt (on condition that human rights and democratic values are observed);
  - comply with the UN's request that 0.6% of gross domestic product be spent on public aid in order to promote development in poor countries;
  - adopt measures to provide effective aid to the countries of the south.
- Support youth policies in developing countries and incorporate a 'youth' dimension in the cooperation programmes.
- Set up an institute to prevent conflict in Europe and in the immediate vicinity.
- Introduce programmes to prevent conflict in Europe and the rest of the world, taking account of the importance of contacts and exchanges between young people in contributing to peace. Youth policy in general and exchange programmes in particular have a real impact in the international field.

Migration

At European level

- Set up aid programmes to help countries of emigration. In concrete terms, they should be given economic aid and employment opportunities in their own area.
- Pay special attention to refugees and asylum-seekers once they have arrived in Europe and encourage targeted initiatives.
- Make Community programmes accessible to young people from third countries (exchanges of information, removal of linguistic and administrative barriers in particular).

Protection of fundamental values and respect for human rights

At national, regional and local levels

- Change national legislation to give homosexuals the same rights as heterosexual couples, including marriage and adoption.
- Schools should address issues relating to society and behavioural trends. Set up sex education courses dealing with all types of practices.
- Promote a comprehensive and compulsory course on human rights, or 'world education'.
- Create specific courses for teachers, civil servants and police.

At European level

- Incorporate European citizens' fundamental rights into the Treaties by taking in the Charter signed in Nice in December 2000, which includes the Convention on Human Rights and adds to it. The young people who took part in the consultation exercise feel that the European Union should also sign this Convention. These fundamental rights must also apply to migrants and refugees.

- A European ombudsman post should be created to ensure that anti-discrimination laws are observed.

Fight against racism and xenophobia

At national, regional and local levels

- Give priority to this issue in national youth activities.

- Encourage and support outreach work via local projects to promote solidarity and accountability. Accordingly, the work of youth organisations must be recognised and developed.

- Following the Youth Council declaration of May 2001, a common understanding is needed of the laws relating to the publication and dissemination of racist or xenophobic information, for example on the Internet.

- Promote joint measures with companies and highlight the benefits of diversity management.

- Education and training should focus on rejection of racism and xenophobia: foreign language education for minorities and immigrants, but also education in their mother tongue; emphasis on diversity in teacher training; participation in the educational system, particularly for migrants and minorities.

At European level

- Make this topic a regular feature on the agendas of ministerial meetings.

- Include youth initiatives in the action plan to combat discrimination, adopted by the EU in 2001.

- Make racism and xenophobia a priority issue in all Community programmes and action affecting young people, including the Social Fund.

- Use the YOUTH programme to set up an Internet platform to combat racism and xenophobia.

- Increase cooperation with the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (Vienna) and support action by civil society in this area.

- Community programmes should pay special attention to young people from ethnic minorities and second or third-generation immigrants.

- Open a debate on the political contradiction between EU immigration policy and the willingness to tackle racism.

- Intensify efforts to develop European citizenship and a European identity.

- Harmonise the rights of refugees and immigrants and enhance their status throughout Europe.

At all levels

- Invite decision-makers at all levels to enhance the value of grassroots projects with a view to closer contact with young people.

- Public administrations and institutions should reflect the diversity of society, and minorities should be appropriately represented.

- Facilitate access to information and communication and support initiatives and projects, particularly at grassroots levels but also in companies, in the world of work and in cultural and artistic initiatives.

- Support networking at all levels and organise consultations between all actors.

Europe's institutions and youth policy

At European level

- Strengthen existing policies and action at Community level, and get the Member States to promote youth policy.

- Strengthen the mechanisms for cooperation between Member States and the European institutions and publicise successful experiences for the benefit of young people.

- Develop an overview of the various policies affecting young people.

- Consult young people on any new initiatives which might affect them directly or indirectly, for example by using Internet portals which have been developed for this purpose at European level.

- In addition to Commission action, the Council of Ministers for Youth must step up its work and the Council's Working Party on Youth must continue to play a part in drafting decisions. Together, the institutions must create a positive climate for the younger generations.

- Develop monitoring tools by means of closer collaboration between the EU and the Council of Europe and begin regular dialogue with the latter with a view to taking joint action.

Mobility

At national, regional and local levels

- Implement the Action Plan[48] and the Recommendation on mobility[49], thus ensuring that mobility for young people is never impeded, and that people taking part in mobility programmes have the same advantages as nationals: reductions on public transport, housing assistance, access to health care, etc.

- Extend the bilateral exchange programmes which constitute the core of cooperation policy in this area. These bilateral exchanges supplement the multilateral exchanges which take place under the YOUTH programme.

- As mobility at local level is often the best springboard for international mobility, network the various people involved at local level by:

  - increasing mobility between rural and urban areas;

  - setting up "mobility partnerships" involving local authorities, the social partners and a wide variety of businesses and NGOs.

- Support training (particularly language training) for the people in universities, associations and administrations who are in charge of organising exchanges. Progress in mobility in the coming years depends on the support they receive and on the pooling of experience. Teacher mobility must also be increased. For example, all teachers of foreign languages should have the opportunity, by 2006, to take part in a mobility programme.

- Enhance the quality of mobility projects and take all possible steps to ensure that young people on mobility programmes retain their autonomy (quality of information, supervision, linguistic and cultural preparation, financial support).

- Incorporate a European, intercultural dimension into education and training for all young people, both in schools and in informal learning. This would facilitate physical mobility.

- Finally, take young people into account when drafting transport policies.

At European level

- Implement the monitoring mechanisms provided for in the Action Plan and the Recommendation on mobility.

- Widen the range of young people taking part in the programmes. Specifically:

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48 Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 14 December 2000 concerning an action plan for mobility - 2000/C371/03-, in OJ C 371/4 of 23.12.2000

49 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers - COM (1999) 708 - C5 - 0052 / 2000 - 2000 / 0021 (COD), in OJ C 178 of 22.6.2001

- give priority to young people for whom mobility is more difficult for social reasons;
- encourage mobility among young people undergoing vocational training and young workers;
- raise awareness of mobility issues among young people as early as possible;
- provide more financial support.

- Initiate a full discussion on mobility for young people with disabilities.
- Take highly practical measures to assist young people prior to departure and on their return.
  - Simplify administrative procedures, for example visa applications for young people from third countries. At European level, the lack of a "mobility passport" is often an obstacle to movement.
  - Introduce general use of "Youth Cards", ensuring that Europe as a whole is covered, with more reductions for young people, more services accessible with the card and better information on all these services.
  - Place greater emphasis on linguistic preparation.
  - Ensure that information on opportunities for mobility is more targeted, adapted to meet young people's needs, easy for them to understand and to find and can be successfully used in conjunction with initiatives which are already ongoing in this field.
  - Officially recognise the experience, both formal and informal, acquired in this way.

Voluntary service

At national, regional and local levels

- In the next ten years, significantly increase voluntary work among young people at all levels (local, regional, national and European).
- In each Member State, create a voluntary service of one form or another, set up the appropriate structures, increase the number of host sites and provide funding. The municipalities, regions, associations and youth organisations should play an essential role in this. The young people themselves should be able to share their experience and help to define and implement voluntary service.
- Draw up a national set of conditions for young volunteers, possibly incorporated into a wider framework. These would set out the rights and responsibilities of voluntary workers, facilitate the development of voluntary work and guarantee social protection for young people.

- Implement without delay the Recommendation and the Action Plan on mobility (see below).

- Raise awareness among employers of the qualities acquired from voluntary work (initiative, self-assurance, teamwork skills, etc.).

- Involve young people in promoting and developing voluntary work.

At European level

- Monitor local, regional, national and European voluntary service schemes in qualitative and quantitative terms. A number of indicators should be set out for purposes of comparison, exchange of experience and identification of future trends.

- Throughout the world there are a great many voluntary service organisations, both public and private. These activities are generally not easily accessible for young people. The European Commission could be given the task of negotiating with these organisations to make them more open to young people.

- Make the European Voluntary Service even more accessible to young people in difficult circumstances and young people with disabilities.

- Recognise voluntary service and enhance its status as a non-formal educational experience.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE WHITE PAPER

(a) On the European Commission's website http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/ywp/index.html the following documents can be downloaded:

- *White Paper on Youth Policy in Europe, National Youth Consultation, May – July 2000,*
  - Summary report, Second version [DE, FR];
  - overview, 27.9.2000;
  - national reports and websites of national conferences.
- *European youth gathering in Paris, 5-7 October 2000. Recommendations of the 450 young delegates [EN, DE].*
- *Report on the Hearing on Youth Policy held in the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels on 20 February 2001.*
- *Meeting on Conditions for Young People in Europe, Report on the conference on 16-17 March 2001, Folkets Hus in Umeå, Sweden.*
- *European Commission White Paper on Youth consultation process: Report of the research consultation pillar, presented in Umeå on 16-17 March 2001.*
- *Position paper of the German Federal Authorities*
- *Eurobarometer 55.1 on young people in Europe in 2001*

(b) On the European Parliament's website, http://www.europarl.eu.int/hearings/20010424/cult/minutes_en.pdf the following document can be downloaded:

- *European Parliament, Directorate General for Research, Summary of the Public Hearing on Youth, 24 April 2001, Brussels, IV/WIP/2001/04/0094.*

(c) On the Economic and Social Committee's website, http://www.ces.eu.int/pages/avis/11_00/en/CES1418-2000_AC_en.doc, the following document can be downloaded:

- *Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the White Paper: Youth Policy (own-initiative), adopted 29 November 2000, CES 1418/2000 [ES, DA, DE, EL, FR, IT, NL, PT, FI, SV].*

(d) On the European Youth Forum's website, http://www.youthforum.org/start/whitepaper/whitepaper.htm the following documents can be downloaded:

- *Contribution of Civil Society organisations to the European Commission's consultation for its White Paper on Youth Policy, 3rd edition, Hearing at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels on 20 February 2001.*

- *Strategy and Key Objectives for a Youth Policy in the European Union, Second Contribution of the European Youth Forum to the European Commission's White Paper on Youth Policy, adopted by the Council of Members, Brussels 6-7 April 2001 [FR].*

ANNEX 2
OVERVIEW ON EUROPEAN ACTION ON THE YOUTH FRONT

1. THE YOUTH PROGRAMME

In 1988 the European Union launched the Programme YOUTH FOR EUROPE, which supported exchanges between young people from different countries.[50] During the period 1989-1991 some 80 000 young people between 15 and 25 years of age benefited from the programme. In July 1991, on the basis of Article 149 of the Treaty establish the European Communities, YOUTH FOR EUROPE II was adopted[51] and in March 1995 the third phase of the programme commenced. It ended in 1999.[52]

In 1996 the European Commission went beyond exchanges and proposed a Community action programme for a European Voluntary Service for young people.[53] This became a fully-fledged Community action programme in 1998, enabling young people to participate as volunteers in social, cultural and environmental activities of benefit to the local community.[54]

In general terms, the YOUTH FOR EUROPE programme and the European Voluntary Service scheme stimulated the development of European, national and local projects involving young people, in particular those facing special difficulties.

In April 2000 the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament adopted the YOUTH Programme, covering the period 2000 to 2006.[55] The YOUTH Programme goes beyond the YOUTH FOR EUROPE programme and the European Voluntary Service scheme, focusing more on the acquisition of knowledge by young people and the creation of cooperation between Member States in the development of youth policy.[56] Moreover, education and training outside school ("non-formal education") plays a more important role in the YOUTH Programme. Projects which the YOUTH programme promotes must have links to the following:

(1) Youth for Europe exchanges;

(2) European Voluntary Service;

(3) Group Initiatives and Future Capital;

(4) Joint Actions with the programmes in education (SOCRATES) and vocational training (LEONARDO DA VINCI);

(5) support measures.

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50 OJ L 158 of 25.6.1988
51 OJ L 217 of 6.8.1991
52 OJ L 87 of 20.4.1995
53 COM(1996)610 of 23.12.1996
54 OJ L 214 of 31.7.1998
55 OJ L 117 of 18.5.2000, pp. 1-10
56 For more information, see http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/youthprogram.html

The programme is also open to Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein as well as to the pre-accession countries (i.e. countries in Eastern Europe as well as Cyprus, Malta, Turkey). Under certain conditions, activities are also possible with third countries (i.e. countries in the Mediterranean area, South-eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and Latin America).

2. POLITICAL INITIATIVES WITH AN IMPACT ON YOUTH

Youth affairs as such are largely the responsibility of the national, regional and local authorities of the Member States. But a closer look at the Treaties[57] reveals the extent of the European dimension of youth matters in a significant number of areas of Community action.

Article 6 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) states that "the Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law". The article refers to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms signed in Rome in 1950.

Article 13 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC) deals with prevention of various kinds of discrimination in the European Union. According to this article, the European Union "may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation".

Article 17 TEC establishes European citizenship. It stipulates that "every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union. [...] Citizens of the Union shall enjoy the rights conferred by this Treaty and shall be subject to the duties imposed thereby".

Under Article 125 TEC – which must be interpreted in connection with Article 2 TEC – the Member States and the European Community shall "work towards developing a coordinated strategy for employment and particularly for promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce and labour markets responsive to economic change". To this end, the European Union launched the European Employment Strategy in Luxembourg in 1997.

In Article 136 TEC the European Community recognises the social rights of workers. Within this framework, "the Community and the Member States [...] shall have as their objectives the promotion of employment, improved living and working conditions, [...] proper social protection, dialogue between management and labour, the development of human resources with a view to lasting high employment and the combating of exclusion".

Article 137 TEC mentions the activities at national level which should be supported by the European Community, such as improvement of the working environment to protect workers' health and safety, working conditions, the information and consultation of workers, the integration of persons excluded from the labour market, etc.

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[57] For more information on the Treaties, see http://europa.eu.int/abc/treaties_en.htm

Article 146 TEC refers to the European Social Fund (ESF), which contributes to the financing of measures to develop human resources, "to render the employment of workers easier and to increase their geographical and occupational mobility within the Community, and to facilitate their adaptation to industrial changes and to changes in production systems". Young people are directly affected by projects financed by the European Social Fund.

Article 149 TEC constitutes the legal basis for cooperation at European level in the field of educational and youth. It stresses the central role of education in providing opportunities for young people to live, to study and to move freely in a Europe without borders. Article 149 TEC lists the different fields in which the European Community can develop cooperation: teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States; mobility of students and teachers; cooperation between educational establishments; exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems of the Member States; youth exchanges and exchanges of socio-educational instructors; distance education. Article 149 constitutes the legal basis of the YOUTH and SOCRATES programmes.

Under Article 150 TEC, the European Community "shall implement a vocational training policy" to supplement action by the Member States. It defines the objectives which should be reached and underlines that "particularly young people" should have access to vocational training and mobility schemes.

Article 151 TEC constitutes the basis for cultural cooperation at European level. According to this article, the Community supplements the Member States' actions in the areas of "culture and history of the European peoples ... cultural heritage of European significance ... cultural exchange ... artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector". Though young people are not explicitly mentioned, they are directly concerned by these actions. Article 151 TEC constitutes the legal basis for the CULTURE 2000 programme, which *inter alia* gives funding to projects in the area of cultural heritage, artistic and literacy creation, professional mobility, dissemination of art and culture and intercultural dialogue and knowledge of European history.

Under Article 152 TEC, the European Community pursues the aim of a high level of human health protection in the definition and implementation of all Community policies and activities. The article explicitly mentions the Community's competence to develop "action in reducing drugs-related health damage, including information and prevention".

Article 153 TEC concerns consumer protection. It stipulates that the Community "shall contribute to protecting the health, safety and economic interests of consumers as well as to promoting their right to information, education and to organise themselves".

Articles 163 to 173 TEC refer to the European Community's objective of strengthening the scientific and technological bases of Community industry and encouraging it to become more competitive at international level. On this basis, in February 2001 the Commission suggested a framework programme for Research and Technological Development which constitutes a major tool to support the creation of the European Research Area (ERA). The latter includes support for training and mobility of young researchers at European level (cf. Article 164 d TEC).

On the basis of Article 177 TEC, the European Community contributes to sustainable economic and social development in the developing countries, their integration into the world economy and the campaign against poverty in these countries. This article constitutes a major tool for the Community's support of the needs of young people in developing countries.

Various political initiatives which benefit young people have been developed or are about to be developed on the basis of these articles. The major themes are as follows:

- *Young people*

Apart from the YOUTH programme mentioned above, these mainly take the form of resolutions of the Council of Ministers, such as the one on the participation of young people,[58] on the non-formal education dimension of sporting activities,[59] on social inclusion of young people[60] and on the promotion of initiative, enterprise and creativity of young people.[61]

- *Employment*

The European Employment Strategy is the overarching annual process launched at the Special European Council in Luxembourg in November 1997 – often also known as "the Luxembourg process". The fact that Member States and the Commission agreed to proceed with this new process, ahead of the ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty and the Employment Title which provides its legislative basis[62], is an indication of the priority attached then, and since, to employment and labour market issues and the wide range of related policy areas.

Within the framework of the European Employment Strategy, the European Commission and the Member States give a clear priority to young people as a core target group in the common efforts to reduce and prevent unemployment. The Employment Guidelines have always referred, for example, to the Member States' target of offering each young unemployed person a "new start" before they reach six months of unemployment. Following the Lisbon Summit, the education and training components of the Guidelines were consolidated to highlight the need for Member States – with other actors such as the social partners – to develop and implement comprehensive and coherent lifelong learning strategies. More detailed references are made to the need to "equip young people with the basic skills relevant to the labour market", "reduce youth...illiteracy" and "reduce substantially the number of young people who drop out of the school system early"[63]. There is also a requirement for Member States to ensure that "particular attention should also be given to young people with learning difficulties and with educational problems." Other Guidelines on social inclusion, the promotion of entrepreneurship and equal opportunities between women and men are also highly relevant to young people.

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58 OJ C 42 of 17.2.1999, pp. 1-2
59 OJ C 8 of 12.1.2000, p. 5
60 OJ C 374 of 28.12.2000, pp. 5-7
61 OJ C 196 of 12.7.2001, pp. 2-4
62 See title VIII, Employment, of the Treaty establishing the European Community; concerning the procedure, see in particular Article 128 TEC
63 OJ L 22 of 24.1.01, pp. 18-26

- *Education and training*

The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 adopted a long-term strategy for a competitive knowledge-based economy with more and better employment and social cohesion. This strategy set new goals for different policy fields which are closely related to youth, such as education, employment, social inclusion, information and civil society. It defined new priorities for offering learning and training opportunities tailored to target groups at different stages of their lives. It contains three main components: a) the development of learning centres; b) the promotion of new basic skills; c) increased transparency of qualifications. One of the most important goals is to increase investment in human resources, to halve the number of 18 to 24 year olds with only lower-secondary level education who are not in further education and training by 2010, to turn schools and training centres – all linked to the Internet – into open learning centres, to provide support to each and every population group and to use the most appropriate methods to define new basic skills.

In November 2001 the Commission published the Communication "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality"[64]. One priority for action relates to valuing learning and the need to improve the ways in which learning participation and learning outcomes are understood and appreciated, particularly in the field of learning outside school (i.e. non-formal learning).

In March 2001 the Commission presented the eLearning Action Plan with regard to linking schools to the Internet, covering infrastructure, training, services and content and cooperation and dialogue.[65] In July 2001 the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament adopted the recommendation on mobility of students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers. Its aim is to abolish obstacles to mobility, to introduce transnational mobility into national policies and to contribute to the dissemination of good practices.[66]

In July 2001 the Commission published a Communicationentitled "Strengthening the Cooperation with Third Countries in the Field of Higher Education"[67]. This Communication had two objectives: to create quality human resources in the partner countries and in the Community by means of mutual development and to promote the European Union as world centre of excellence for studies/training and scientific and technological research.

Currently the Commission prepares a proposal for a directive on the admission of inhabitants of third countries to the EU for study and training purposes.This will touch upon hundreds of thousands of students. The proposal will aim at enhancing the reception of foreign students and will at the same time strengthen Europe's position as place for excellence training worldwide.

- *Information society*

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64 Communication from the Commission "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality"

65 European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, The eLearning Action Plan, Designing tomorrow's education, COM(2001)172, 28.3.2001

66 OJ L 215 of 9.8.2001, pp. 30-37

67 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on strengthening cooperation with third countries in the field of higher education, COM(2001)385 final.

An essential part of the Lisbon strategy, the eEurope 2002 Action Plan[68], approved at the Feira Summit in June 2000, comprises a set of action areas to accelerate Europe's entry into the information society. The action "European youth into the digital age" aims to promote the use of digital technologies and the Internet in European schools and the acquisition of new skills. The essential role of e-Learning in achieving the goals of the eEurope 2002 Action Plan has led to the adoption by the Commission of the eLearning Action Plan mentioned above.

In addition, three other actions of the eEurope action plan will facilitate the integration of youth to the information society : "Faster Internet access for researchers and students", which aims at upgrading research and university networks within the EU; "Working in a knowledge based economy", which puts emphasis on life-long learning and digital skills; "Participation for all", with the promotion of public Internet access points.

With regards to research and technological development in the area of Information Society, the European Commission has launched several initiatives in order to create a critical mass of resources able to support, guide and stimulate research and innovation in education and training. E-learning technologies will play a fundamental role in ensuring that Europeans have flexible, convenient and cost-effective access to learning resources and services, so that they may develop the essential skills necessary for the knowledge society. Within the IST (Information Society Technologies) research programme, which is part of the 5th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, education and training is one of the key priorities. A certain number of IST projects are currently financed in the Education and Training area, that cover technology development and applications that facilitate the access to and the integration of youth into the information society.

- *Entrepreneurship*

In May 2000 the Commission published the Communication on "Challenges for enterprise policy in the knowledge-driven economy"[69], which states that "Education for entrepreneurship is another driver towards a more dynamic enterprise culture. General knowledge about business and entrepreneurship should be taught, right through primary, secondary and higher education" and that "to expand the number of entrepreneurs, enterprise policy will aim at improving the start-up rate among women, young people and the unemployed...".

The Forum on "Training for Entrepreneurship" (Nice, October 2000)[70] – co-organised by the Commission and the French authorities – has promoted the exchange of best practice in this field and raised awareness at the European level of the objectives that must be achieved.

As a follow-up to the conclusions of this Forum and as part of the Multiannual Programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (2001-2005)[71], the Commission has launched a "best procedure" project on education and training for entrepreneurship. This will focus on education – from primary school to university – and will aim at

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68 "eEurope 2002 – An information society for all. Action Plan" (http://europa.eu.int/ecurope)

69 COM(2000) 256 final (OJ C311E, 31.10.2000, pp. 180-186)

70 http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/training_education/index.htm

71 OJ L 333, 29.12.2000, pp. 84-91

identifying and assessing measures and best practices developed at national or local level in order to promote entrepreneurial attitudes and skills within education systems.

On 20 June 2000, the European Council approved the European Charter for Small Enterprises[72] in Santa Maria da Feira. The Charter calls upon Member States and the Commission to take action in a number of areas to support and encourage small enterprises. One of the key areas for improvement in the Charter is "Education and training for entrepreneurship".

- *Social affairs*

The Lisbon Strategy called for a renewed and modernised European social model covering three key issues: 1) investing in people; 2) building an active and dynamic welfare state; 3) strengthening actions against unemployment, social exclusion and poverty. Concerning social inclusion the Lisbon European Council noted that the number of people living below the poverty line and in social exclusion in the Union is unacceptable. Efforts must be made to improve the skills of these young people, to promote access to knowledge and to fight unemployment.

The Nice European Council in December 2000 approved the objectives of combating poverty and social exclusion adopted by the Council. The four objectives adopted at Nice are all highly relevant to young people. They are as follows : 1) to facilitate participation in employment and access for all to the resources, rights, goods and services (in particular social protection, housing and basic services, healthcare, education, justice, culture, sport and leisure); 2) to prevent the risks of exclusion; 3) to help the most vulnerable; 4) to mobilise all relevant bodies. Specific reference is made to preventing the exclusion from school and the elimination of social exclusion among young people.

The Council invited the Member States to develop their priorities in relation to these objectives and to submit by June 2001 a two-year national action plans on combating poverty and social exclusion. All Member States have already submitted such plans. These plans confirm that the issue of poverty and social exclusion among young people is an issue of major concern to most Member States.

The Nice European Council also approved the Social Agenda, which defines specific priorities for action over the next five years, and confirmed the importance of the strategies to combat all forms of discrimination in accordance with Article 13 of the Treaty.

The Stockholm Summit in March 2001 confirmed this strategy and invited the Council and the European Parliament to agree on a proposal for a social inclusion programme in 2001. This programme will provide an important opportunity for an exchange of learning and best practices between Member States on reducing and preventing poverty and social exclusion amongst young people.

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72 The European Charter for Small Enterprises was adopted by the General Affairs Council on 13.6.2000

- *Health*

Young people are part of the strategy laid down in the Community Action Programme on Public Health. In July 2001, the Health Council agreed on a common position on this Action Programme (2001-2006)[73]. One of the main aspects is the improvement of information and knowledge about health issues. The programme also covers prevention of AIDS and drug dependence. The Council also adopted a recommendation against alcohol abuse by young people, in particular children and adolescents.

- *Prevention of racism and xenophobia*

In 1997 the Council welcomed the European Year against Racism and stressed that Member States' efforts must be intensified and underlined the importance of education. In 2000 the Education and Youth Council took note of the need to tackle racism and xenophobia among young people. At the Youth Council in May 2001 a declaration on combating racism and xenophobia on the Internet by intensifying work with young people was adopted.

- *Sport*

The Amsterdam Treaty recognised in declaration no. 29 the social significance of sport, in particular its role in forging identity and bringing people together. The declaration also emphasised the important role of sports associations and of amateur sport. On this basis the EU has developed an active role in the area of sports. It supports *inter alia* projects promoting the integration of young people through sporting activities, prevention of doping in sports, and a school information campaign on ethical values in sport and Olympic ideals. The resolution of the Council of December 1999[74] stressed the need to exploit the non-formal educational potential of sporting activities in the context of European cooperation policy in the field of youth. The Nice European Council adopted a declaration on the specific characteristics of sport, inviting the Community to take into account social, educational and cultural values of sport in its action under the various Treaty provisions. The European Council also agreed to intensify European cooperation on anti-doping.

The European Commission has proposed to the Council and the European Parliament that 2004 be declared the "European Year of Education through Sport". The main objectives of this European Year will be to encourage the education sector and the sports organisations to work together in order to use the educational value of sport and its role in social integration and to emphasise the importance of voluntary sporting activities as an aspect of informal education. Schools should be encouraged to give greater importance to sporting activities in their curricula as well as in school exchanges.

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73 OJ C 307 of 31.10.2001, pp. 27-40

74 OJ C 8 of 12.1.2000, p. 5

3. FUNDING IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, CULTURE AND YOUTH PROTECTION

There are a number of other funding lines in the field of education, employment, culture and youth protection, which directly or indirectly support measures in favour of young people. Here are a few examples:

- Infrastructure: during the funding period 2000 – 2006, the European Regional Fund provides support in certain regions for infrastructure projects which include projects for the benefit of young people (such as youth centres, schools, etc).

- Employment and social inclusion: during the funding period 2000-2006 the European Social Fund is providing back-up for schemes in the field of labour, social inclusion, information and counselling, etc. at national and regional level which are specifically addressed to young people.

- Education: the SOCRATES programme supports exchange and mobility measures for young people in schools or at universities.

- Vocational training: the LEONARDO programme gives young people access to modern vocational training services, language-learning facilities and work abroad.

- Culture: the programme CULTURE 2000 includes a "youth" element in allocating funding to projects in the area of creativity and mobility, dissemination of art and culture and inter-cultural dialogue and knowledge of European history.

- Protection of youth: the DAPHNE programme supports preventive measures to stamp out violence against children, young persons and women.

4. THE CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

The proclamation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in Nice in December 2000 constituted an important step. The Charter combines in a single text the civil, political, economic, social and societal rights of people. Its two chapters about freedoms (Chapter II) and solidarity (Chapter IV) explicitly recognise the rights of children and young people (see Article 14 about the "right to education", Article 24 about "the rights of the child" and Article 32 about the "prohibition of child labour and protection of young people at work").

5. SUPPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Parliament has actively supported activities at European level in favour of youth, especially concerning the adoption of the programmes related to youth. In March 1999 it adopted the "resolution on a youth policy for Europe" which stressed "the increasing prominence of the "youth factor" in the context of economic and cultural changes in European societies".[75]

In April 2001 the Committee in charge of Youth Affairs organised a public hearing on youth. MEPs, youth experts, representatives from economic and social

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[75] OJ C 175 of 21.6.1999, p. 50

organisations, youth associations and non-organised young people attended. The number of participants and the high level of discussion was impressive and contributed to the success of the meeting.

The Committee's rapporteur on youth stated in the hearing that, "a coherent EU policy as regards young people ...[is] still missing and the main objective of the White Paper ...[should be] to develop an integrated approach to tackle the concerns of young people".[76] The European Parliament underlined that the White Paper should serve as a resource of ideas, inspiration and discussion in order to show examples of good practice and to encourage the Member States and regional and local authorities to take new initiatives.

Young people said that they had high expectations in the White Paper, especially in areas such as information, anti-discrimination, equal opportunities for young disabled people, formal and non-formal education, employment and social inclusion as well as participation in exchange programmes, demographic change in Europe and the participation of young people in society. They said that "a true European youth policy is needed ... [and that] youth policy at all levels from local to European should be complementary and ... should be co-ordinated between the different levels".

6. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Young people are indirectly represented in the European Economic and Social Committee (ESC) since many of the ESC's members are linked to organisations with youth branches which are active at the national, regional and local level. In November 2000 the ESC adopted an opinion on youth policy.[77] According to it youth policy must value young people as a "resource to society" and enable them to become "active, free and responsible citizens". Youth policy is considered to be an "integrated cross-sectoral policy" with the aim, "to improve and develop the living conditions and participation of young people by encompassing the whole range of social, cultural and political issues that affect them as well as other groups in society."

In February 2001 the ESC and the European Commission organised, in cooperation with the Youth Forum of the European Union, a hearing of civil society in the context of the White Paper. The hearing was extremely useful since it gave first hand information on the situation of young people in Europe and their social, economic and personal expectations.

The regional and local authorities represented at the Committee of the Regions (CoR) are in most Member States the central actors with regard to the implementation of youth policy. In 1999 the CoR adopted an opinion on "local and regional cooperation in protecting children and young people in the European Union

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76 European Parliament, Directorate General for Research, Summary of the Public Hearing on Youth, organised by the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport, 24 April 2001 in Brussels, IV/WIP/2001/04/0094, 18 May 2001.

77 Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the White Paper on Youth Policy, CES 1418/2000, 29-30.11.2000, p. 2-4

from abuse and neglect".[78] The CoR stressed the need for an EU-wide strategy on preventing abuse and neglect of children and young people without interfering with the responsibilities of national, regional and local authorities. The CoR's view is that involving children and young people in decisions that affect their lives and to empower them to get their voices heard contributes to prevention. The CoR argues that the decentralised structures of a Europe close to the citizens require more co-ordination, cross-border and transnational cooperation and that children and young people should not be ignored in this process.

7. DIALOGUE WITH THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM

The European Youth Forum (EYF) was founded in 1979 in order to represent youth organisations at European level and to start a dialogue with young people. Its members are the national youth councils in the EU Member States and international non-governmental youth organisations. It fosters contacts and communication between its member organisations – which bring together millions of young people – and with individual young people on a day-to-day basis. It aims at taking on a stronger representation role. The EYF has acquired considerable expertise in youth work, youth policy, the non-governmental youth sectors and questions of civil society. The EYF is represented in European Commission working groups and is involved in selecting projects within the YOUTH Programme.

The EYF played an important part in the consultation process which led up to this White Paper. It took part in the consultation of young people and organised together with the Commission and the ESC the consultation of civil society organisations. The EYF worked out a contribution of its own and submitted it for discussion of the White Paper.[79]

8. THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

In the 1970s the Council of Europe established the European Youth Centre (EYC) and the European Youth Foundation (EYF) in Strasbourg. In 1995 a second European Youth Centre was opened in Budapest. The programmes and projects of the EYC and the EYF are co-managed.[80].

The Council of Europe adopted a number of declarations and resolutions on such questions as the participation of young people, citizenship, non-formal education, mobility and the combat against racism.

In March 1992 it adopted the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life.[81] The Charter urged greater involvement of young people in public affairs at regional and local level and called for the implementation of "various forms of participation" which should apply "to all young people without

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78 Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 18.11.1999, COM-7/017

79 Strategy and Key Objectives for a Youth Policy in the European Union, Second Contribution of the European Youth Forum to the European Commission's White Paper on Youth Policy, adopted by the Council of Members, Brussels, 6-7 April 2001

80 Concerning the principle of co-management, see footnote no. 20.

81 Resolution 237, adopted on 19.3.1992 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE)

discrimination". In the recommendation on youth participation and the future of civil society, adopted in 1997, the Committee of Ministers reaffirmed "the crucial role of the participation of young people in the development of civil society as a resource for the constant renewal of democratic society."[82]

At the 5th conference of the Council of Europe in Bucharest in April 1998, the Youth Ministers declared that the integration of young people into working life would be built on the skills and qualifications that they acquire by non-formal education. The Council of Europe underlined the importance of non-formal education which clearly enriches traditional models of education. The Council of Europe took a further step when it adopted a recommendation on non-formal education in January 2000, in which it acknowledged that formal educational systems alone cannot respond to rapid and constant technological, social and economic change and for this reason should be reinforced by non-formal educational practices.[83]

The fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance has a long tradition within the Council of Europe. At the beginning of the 1990s it launched a broad European Youth Campaign in cooperation with European youth organisations for a tolerant society and stimulated pilot projects. The Council of Europe also focused on the development of the youth card as a service card that aims at improving the situation of young participants in mobility projects. It promotes a voluntary service scheme for young people at the national and European level and maintains the Interrail system at a reasonable price. It provides support for non-profit platforms for youth exchanges. A partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe was set up in 1998 in order to develop a training programme for youth trainers for the promotion of common values such as human rights, pluralist democracy, the rule of law, active citizenship and European cooperation[84]. The concrete actions resulting from the partnership include training publications and cooperation in the field of advice and research with regard to training events.

9. STUDIES AND OPINION POLLS LAUNCHED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Around thirty studies were cofinanced over five years under the YOUTH FOR EUROPE programme. The majority were comparative analyses, but some were case studies, covering three subject categories: 1) disadvantaged young people and risk behaviours; 2) values, expectations and identity of young people, particularly in relation to Europe (including the question of young immigrants, racism and xenophobia); 3) non-formal education methods.

Four studies were funded under the European Voluntary Service programme. They cover sport as an instrument of social integration for young people; the national civilian service schemes; access for young people with disabilities to the European voluntary service; the certificates issued on completion of voluntary service (national or other).

The impact of the European Voluntary Service scheme has also been evaluated.

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82 Committee of Ministers, Recommendation no. R(97)3 adopted 4.2.1997

83 Parliamentary Assembly, Recommendation 1437 on non-formal education, adopted 24.1.2000, §7.i

84 http://www.coe.fr/youth/english/partnership/new/

A study on young people and youth policies in the Member States was carried out by the IARD Institute (Milan) and published in June 2001.[85] It provides an overview of quantitative and qualitative data illustrating young people's situations and expectations. It also describes youth structures and policies in the Member States.

As part of the Third Multiannual Programme for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in the European Union (1997-2000)[86], the Commission presented the study on "Young Entrepreneurs, Women Entrepreneurs, Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurs and Co-entrepreneurs in the European Union and Central and Eastern Europe". The study identified the main problems and challenges faced by these target groups of entrepreneurs and contained a number of recommendations to help foster their development.

In parallel with this work, the Commission set out to gauge the opinions of young people in Europe. In 1997 a public opinion poll - Eurobarometer 47.2 "Young Europeans" – was carried out. The Commission launched another Eurobarometer survey with a view to drawing up this White Paper on Youth Policy. The results were published in October 2001[87].

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85 http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/studies.html

86 OJ L 6, 10.01.1997, pp.25-31

87 http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/ywp/eurobarometer_youth.html

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EFF-088 (Rev. 2/2001)